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R. VAN DEN BROEK

THE MYTH OF THE PHOENIX

ACCORDING TO CLASSICAL AND EARLY CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

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AND EARLY CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

ÉTUDES PRÉLIMINAIRES AUX RELIGIONS ORIENTALES DANS L'EMPIRE ROMAIN

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R. VAN DEN BROEK

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LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1972

Phoenix from Old St. Peter's, Rome

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WITH A FRONTISPIECE, 40 PLATES
AND 2 FOLDING MAPS

LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1972

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PREFACE

The Dutch manuscript of this book was completed in the spring of 1969. Since then, only a few minor additions or changes have been made.

During its preparation—for submission to the Theological Faculty of the University of Utrecht as a doctoral thesis—I received advice and help from many quarters. Now that it is appearing, it is my privilege to thank all those who assisted me in any way, with special mention of Professor G. Quispel, Professor J. Zandee, and Professor M. J. Vermaseren. I am particularly indebted to Professor Vermaseren for his advice in the period during which I was collecting the material used for the Plates and for his decision to include the book in his "Études préliminaires".

The origin of the photographs is indicated in the documentation accompanying the Plates; I wish to add an expression of my gratitude to all the persons and institutions mentioned there. Several particularly elusive photographs could not have been obtained without the mediation of Professor M. Avi-Yonah (Jerusalem), Professor Ph. Derchain (Cologne), and Professor A. Ferrua (Rome).

My thanks are also extended to Mrs. I. Seeger, who did the translation, to Mrs. F. Derksen, who prepared the maps, and to the staff of Brill, who devoted so much time and effort to the realization of this edition.

Breukelen, December 20th, 1971

ABBREVIATIONS

A. *Works cited by author's name only, or by author's name and abbreviated title*

Bin Gorion, M. J., *Die Sagen der Juden*, 2nd ed., Frankfurt, 1962
Bonnet, H., *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1952
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—, *Études syriennes*, Paris, 1917
—, *After life in Roman paganism*, 2nd ed., New York, 1959 (1st ed. 1922)
—, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains*, Paris, 1942
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—, *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, I, II, III, Rome, 1929-1936

B. *Other abbreviations*

AC	L'Antiquité Classique
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BJ	Bonner Jahrbücher
CBM	The Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, ed. by H. Mattingly, London, 1923 ff.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DACL	Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
FGrH	Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, ed. by F. Jacoby, Leiden
FVS	Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, ed. by H. Diels and W. Kranz, I, 9th ed., Berlin, 1960
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte

JThSt	The Journal of Theological Studies
MDAI	Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts
MGH, a.a.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores antiquissimi
MGH, scr.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores
MMAI	Monuments et Mémoires publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Fondation Piot)
MVG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
PS	Patrologia Syriaca
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RE	Real-Encyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, ed. Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll *et al.*
REG	Revue des Études Grecques
REL	Revue des Études Latines
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RIC	The Roman Imperial Coinage, ed. by H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham, *et al.*, London, 1923 ff.
RIN	Rivista Italiana di Numismatica
RhMPh	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
SBE	The Sacred Books of the East
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
TS	Texts and Studies
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
VC	Vigiliae Christianae
ZÄS	Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft

PART ONE

PRELIMINARIES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Classical myth of the phoenix has been the subject of many studies since the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Humanists had published so many original texts that it became possible to make a systematic study of the Classical heritage. At that time, the main question was whether the phoenix was to be considered a real bird or belonged entirely to the realm of fable.[1] The learned discussions on this problem were full of citations of Classical and Early Christian passages in which the bird was mentioned. Consequently, as early as 1599 the Italian physician and naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi could give a detailed discussion of the phoenix myth in his *Ornithologia*, with numerous quotations.[2]

The question of whether the phoenix must be considered a fabulous bird was reopened in 1633, in all seriousness,[3] when Patricius

[1] Hieronymus Cardanus, *De subtilitate libri XV, nunc demum recogniti atque perfecti*, Basiliae, 1554, 337, could already say: "*At phoenicem praedicarunt multi avem, fabulae quam veritati propriorem*". He referred to the Indian bird *semenda* as possible source of the Classical phoenix myth. The same was done by Julius Caesar Scaliger in his *Exotericarum exercitationum libri XV de subtilitate, ad Hieronymum Cardanum*, Francofurti, 1601 (1st ed. 1557), 731, although he had more reservations about the *semenda* than Cardanus; see also below, p. 201, n. 4. Pierre Belon, in his *L'histoire de la nature des oyseaux...*, Paris, 1555, 329-331, and *Les observations de plusieurs singularitéz et choses mémorables...*, Paris, 1588 (1st ed. 1553), 421, identified the phoenix with the *rhyntaces* mentioned by Ctesias (see below, p. 337, n. 2). According to Belon, the ornamental bunches of feathers worn by the Turks and which became high style in the French salons of the sixteenth century originated from the phoenix-rhyntaces. From the illustrations of this bird given by Belon, these feathers must have derived from the bird of paradise; see also D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, *A glossary of Greek birds*, 2nd ed., London, 1936, 309, and n. 3 here.

[2] Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae hoc est De avibus historiae libri XII*, (= *Opera Omnia* I), Bononiae, 1599, 816-833.

[3] In popular science, belief in the reality of the phoenix persisted; see for example René François (= Etienne Binet), *Essay des merveilles de nature et des plus nobles artifices*, Rouen, 1626, 70-73, and the remarkable book by the Dutch Johannes Aysma, *Het Ryck der Goden onder den Eenige waare God...*,

Junius published the *editio princeps* of the so-called *First Epistle of Clement*,[1] in which the phoenix is taken as proof of the possibility of resurrection. There was general agreement that great authority had to be assigned to the words of such an almost apostolic man as Clement of Rome (*ca.* 100 A.D.). Furthermore, it was considered impossible that a man of Clement's stature could be so mistaken that he would use a fable to gain acceptance for one of the basic tenets of Christian belief. Some scholars then unconditionally accepted the phoenix myth as true, since Clement evidently did so; others rejected the whole epistle as spurious on the basis of the myth[2].

Amsterdam, 1686, 382-384; for the latter compare also A. M. Lamend, *Fantastische wezens*, in *Volkskunde*, 53, 1952, 68-70. Real phoenix feathers were believed to be in circulation: according to William Camden, *Brittaniae... chorographica descriptio*, Londini, 1607, 783, Pope Clement VIII sent a phoenix feather to the Irishman Hugh O'Neil, who had defeated the troops of Elizabeth I at Blackwater in 1598. In the middle of the seventeenth century feathers from the wings of the phoenix were exhibited in the Tradescant Museum at London; see John Evelyn's *Diary* for Sept. 17, 1657 (ed. E. S. de Beer, *The diary of John Evelyn*, III, Oxford, 1955, 199). According to Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia epidemica, or Vulgar errors*, III, 12 (ed. Ch. Sayles, *The works of Sir Thomas Browne*, II, Edinburgh, 1912, 6), however, such feathers actually originated from the bird of paradise.

[1] Patricius Junius, *Clementis ad Corinthios epistula prior...*, Oxonii, 1633.

[2] For a rapid orientation concerning this interesting episode in the history of patristic studies, see A. Calovius, *Biblia Novi Testamenti illustrata*, II, Dresdae et Lipsiae, 1719 (1st ed. 1672-1676), 250-256, and W. E. Tentzel, *De phoenice apud Iobum et Clementem Romanum* (1682), in his *Exercitationes selectae*, I, Lipsiae et Francofurti, 1692, 32-46. These scholars rejected *1 Clement* on the basis of the use of the phoenix myth, and therefore challenged Junius (see p. 34 of the latter's commentary) and the later publishers of *1 Clement*, Johannes Mader (1654) and Johannes Fell (1669), who were of the opinion that the Classical phoenix was a real bird because Clement had accepted it without reservation. In a letter to Jérome Bignon dated 17 July 1634, Hugo de Groot had already stated that *1 Clement* was authentic; see his *Epistulae ad Gallos, nunc primum editae*, Lugdunum Batavorum, 1648, 418-423. After Bignon had drawn his attention to the dubious phoenix myth Grotius stated in an unpublished letter (see the citation in Calovius, p. 256; this letter is not mentioned in J. ter Meule-P. J. J. Diermanse, *Bibliographie de Hugo Grotius*, 's-Gravenhage, 1950) that in his opinion the phoenix myth had been generally accepted by the *eruditi* in Clement's time and that by using the story of the bird Clement had intended only to indicate the possibility of resurrection. For Bignon's letter, see also J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, I, 1, London, 1890, 97. De Groot's opinion first occurs in the scientific literature in G. J. Vossius, *De theologia gentili et Physiologia christiana...* (1642) in *Opera Omnia*, Amstelodami, 1700, 464-465, and in J. H.

It was in this discussion that the problem of the function of a Classical mythological conception in Early Christian thinking was raised for the first time.

Meanwhile, the phoenix myth in all its complexity was being studied intensively. In 1663, Samuel Bochart published his *Hierozoicum*, in which he devoted a detailed and extremely thorough discussion to the phoenix, drawing on his remarkable familiarity with the Classical, Early Christian, Jewish, and Arabic literature.[1] He could include the phoenix in this work on the animals in the Bible because even in Classical times various authors had found mention of the phoenix in *Job* xxix.18 and *Ps.* xcii.12.[2] Since the studies of Aldrovandi and Bochart, only a few new data have been uncovered in the investigation of the myth, and all the later studies are based on the work of these almost completely forgotten scholars. Especially in the eighteenth century, scholars seem to have been so deeply impressed by the earlier studies that they could add little to them. A good illustration of this is provided by the lengthy work of Texelius.[3]

It was not until the first decades of the nineteenth century that several excellent new studies on the phoenix appeared. In the first place reference must be made here to the detailed treatment given by Larcher to the problem of whether the phoenix had been an astronomical symbol, and to the short but very exhaustive two-volume study by Henrichsen on the various Classical traditions concerning the phoenix as well as those pertaining to related birds outside the

Beoclerus, who devoted a university lecture to it in 1643 and had three of his students debate it; see the latter's *Programmata academica*, XII, in *Opera*, V, Argentorati, 1712, 377-381. As early an author as Photius (*Bibliotheca*, 126) put forward as an argument against Clement: ὅτι ὡς παναληθεστάτῳ τῷ κατὰ τὸν φοίνικα τὸ ὄρνεον ὑποδείγματι κέχρηται.

[1] Samuel Bochartus, *Hierozoici sive bipartiti operis de animalibus S. Scripturae pars prior*, 4th ed., in his *Opera Omnia*, II, Lugdunum Batavorum et Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1712, 817-825.

[2] Long before Bochart, Sixtinus Amama, *Anti-Barbarus biblicus*, Amstelrodami, 1628, 835, had pointed to the erroneous interpretation of *Ps.* xci. 13 (LXX, Vulg.) by certain early Christian authors; see also on this point below, p. 57; for *Job* xxix. 18, p. 58-60.

[3] P. Texelius, *Phoenix visus et auditus*, Roterodami, 1703, and Amstelaedami, 1706. See also the studies of Des Vignoles and Forster mentioned on p. 27.

Classical world.[1] Mention must also be made of the brilliant compilation of the information supplied by earlier investigations given by the gifted Giacomo Leopardi, which he wrote at the age of seventeen.[2] In the course of the nineteenth century interest was concentrated mainly on the phoenix as symbol of astronomical and chronological periods and, in this context, on the relationship between the Classical phoenix and the Egyptian *benu*, to which we will return in the following chapter.[3]

In the present century the phoenix myth has continued to attract scientific interest. For studies concerned with the entire phoenix tradition we may refer to the contributions in several comprehensive works by Türk, Leclercq, and Rusch,[4] as well as to the studies by such authors as Zimmermann, Sbordone, Thompson, Edsman, Pagliaro, and Mary McDonald,[5] and especially to the major works by Hubaux and Leroy and by Marieluise Walla.[6] In the broadly conceived

[1] P. H. Larcher, *Mémoire sur le phénix, ou Recherches sur les périodes astronomiques et chronologiques des Égyptiens*, in *Histoire et mémoires de l'Institut impérial de France*, Classe d'Histoire et de Littérature ancienne, Paris, 1815, *Mémoires*, 166-307. This study had already been presented on 28 Thermidor of the year XIII (= August 16, 1805). R. J. F. Henrichsen, *De phoenicis fabula apud Graecos, Romanos et populos orientales commentatio*, Hauniae, I, 1825, II, 1827.

[2] G. Leopardi, *Saggio sopra gli errori popolari degli antichi*, Ch. XVII: *Della fenice* (ed. F. Flora, *Tutte le opere di Giacomo Leopardi*, 5th ed., Verona, 1957, 431-441). It is evident from the title that this work was inspired by the *Pseudodoxia epidemica, or Vulgar errors* by Sir Thomas Browne: see above, p. 4, n. 3 of p. 3.

[3] See p. 26-29.

[4] G. Türk, *Phoenix*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, III, 2, 1902-1909, 3450-3472; H. Leclercq, *Phénix*, in *DACL*, XIV, 1, 1941, 682-691; A. Rusch, *Phoinix*, in *RE*, 20, 1, 1941, 414-423.

[5] F. Zimmermann, *Die Phönixsage, ihr religionsgeschichtlicher Ursprung und ihre Verwertung in der H. Schrift und im Dienste kirchenschriftstellerischen Argumentation*, in *Theologie und Glaube*, 4, 1912, 202-223; F. Sbordone, *La fenice nel culto di Helios*, in *Rivista indo-greca-italica di filologia-lingua-antichità*, 19, 1935, 1-46; Thompson (p. 3, n. 1 above), 306-309; C. M. Edsman, *Ignis divinus. Le feu comme moyen de rajeunissement et d'immortalité*, Lund, 1949, 178-204; *idem* very briefly also in *Phönix (religionsgeschichtlich)*, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., V, Tübingen, 1961, 357-358; A. Pagliaro, *Il volo della fenice*, in *Capitolium*, 32, 1957, no. 4, 9-11; Sister Mary McDonald, *Phoenix redivivus*, in *Phoenix*, 14, 1960, 187-206.

[6] J. Hubaux and M. Leroy, *Le mythe du phénix dans les littératures grecque et latine* (= Biblioth. de la Fac. de Philos. et Lett. de l'Univ. de Liège, fasc. LXXXII), Liège-Paris, 1939; reviewed by M. P. Nilsson, in *Gnomon*, 19,

study by Hubaux and Leroy, various aspects of the phoenix myth are discussed in eight chapters, predominantly on the basis of the data provided by Lactantius in his poem *De ave phoenice*. This is unquestionably one of the best studies ever devoted to the phoenix, although, as will become clear, a few fundamental objections can be raised. Almost half of Walla's study, of which only a few copies are available, consists of a commentary on the poem by Lactantius. In her discussion of the Classical phoenix myth in general she gives detailed attention to the assumed Egyptian background and comes to quite different conclusions than those arrived at in the present study, as will appear in due course. She adds few new data to those given by Hubaux and Leroy.[1]

In addition to these general studies, certain aspects have been treated separately.[2] An occasional passage on the phoenix in a Classical or Early Christian author has elicited a more detailed commentary,[3] but *De ave phoenice* has led to numerous publications, some of which deal extensively with the Classical and Early Christian traditions.[4]

1941, 212-215, and P. J. Enk, in *Museum*, 52, 1947, 36-39. Marieluise Walla, *Der Vogel Phönix in der antiken Literatur und die Dichtung des Laktanz*, Thesis Vienna, 1965.

[1] Walla's work first came to my attention, through a reference to it in *L'année philologique*, 38 (1967), Paris, 1969, 331, after the manuscript of the present book had reached completion. With the assistance of the Librarian of the University of Vienna Library I was able to obtain one of the photocopies of her typewritten thesis and thus to take her considerations into account as much as was still possible.

[2] E.g. M. Laurent, *Le phénix, les serpents et les aromates dans une miniature du XIIe siècle*, in *AC*, 4, 1935, 375-401; J. Hubaux and M. Leroy, *Vulgo nascetur amomum*, in *Mélanges Bidez*, (Annuaire de l'Inst. de Philol. et d'Hist. Orient., II), Bruxelles, 1934, 505-530; A.-J. Festugière, *Le symbol du phénix et le mysticisme hermétique*, in *MMAI*, 38, 1941, 147-151, included without modification in his *Hermétisme et mystique païenne*, Paris, 1967, 256-260.

[3] J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, I, 2, London, 1890, 83-89. P. Monceau, *La légende du Phénix chez Eusèbe*, in *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de la France*, 1905, 171-172; R. Knopf, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, I, (Handb. zum N.T. Erg. bnd 1), Tübingen, 1920, 88-90. B. van der Walle and J. Vergote, *Hieroglyphica d'Horapollon*, in *Chronique d'Égypte*, 17, no. 35, 1943, 69 (*ad* I, 35) and *ibid.*, 18, no. 36, 1943, 217, 219 (*ad* II, 57); A. Kurfess, *Phoenix quintus?*, in *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, 3, 1948, 194-195 (ad *Orac. Sibyll.*, VIII, 139).

[4] Attention is paid to the poem almost without exception by the authors of Roman and Early Christian literary histories; *cf.* e.g. M. Manitius, *Ge-*

This brief sketch of the great scholarly interest the phoenix has received in the course of the centuries makes it necessary to explain why still another investigation of the entire tradition was undertaken.

In the existing literature much attention has been given to the

schichte der christich-lateinischen Poesie bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts, Stuttgart, 1891, 44-49; M. Schanz, C. Hosius, and G. Krüger, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, III (= Handb. der klass. Altertumswiss., 8.3), München, 1922, 431-433; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la Littérature latine chrétienne*, 3rd ed. by G. Bardy, II, Paris, 1947, 477-479; and J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II, Utrecht-Antwerp-Westminster, 1953, 403-404. Mention may be made of the following articles and books (those to which I was unable to gain access are marked with an asterisk): A. Riese, *Ueber den Phoenix des Lactantius (A.L. 731) und andere Gedichte der lateinischen Anthologie*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 31, 1876, 447-452; idem, *Zu dem Phoenix des Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, 55, 1900, 316-318; H. Dechent, *Ueber die Echtheit des Phönix von Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 35, 1880, 39-55;* F. Schoell, *Vom Vogel Phoenix*, Akad. Rede, Heidelberg, 1890; S. Brandt, *Zum Phoenix des Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 47, 1892, 390-403; C. Weymann, *Zum Phoenix des Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 47, 1892, 640; R. Loebe, *In scriptorem carminis de Phoenice, quod L. C. F. Lactantii esse creditur, observationes*, in *Jahrbüch. f. prot. Theol.*, 18, 1892, 34-65; A. Harnack, *Neue Studien zur jüngst entdeckten lateinischen Übersetzung des 1. Clemensbriefs*, in *Sitzungsber. der kngl. preuss. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Berlin*, 1894, no. 31, Berlin, 1894, 608;* A. Knappitsch, *De Caecili Firmiani Lactantii Ave Phoenice*, Progr. Graz, 1896, 3-17; P. de Winterfeld, *Coniectanea*, in *Hermes*, 33, 1898, 170-172, idem, *Ad Lactantium, "De ave Phoenice"*, in *Philologus*, 62, 1903, 478-480; C. Pascal, *Sul carme "De ave phoenice" attribuito a Lattanzio*, in *Rendiconto della Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti*, NS, 18, Napoli, 1904, 221-239 and idem, *Letteratura latina medievale. Nuovi saggi e note critiche*, Catania, 1909, 3-16 ("I carmi De phoenice"); P. Monceau, *Études critiques sur Lactance*, in *Revue de Philologie*, 29, 1905, 134-139; C. Landi, *Il carme "De ave phoenice" e il suo autore*, in *Atti e Memorie della Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova*, NS, 31, 1914-1915, 33-72; H. Brewer, *Die dem Lactantius beigelegte Dichtung "De ave phoenice"*, in *Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.*, 46, 1922, 163-165; M. Masante, *Lattanzio Firmiano o Lattanzio Placido autore del "De ave phoenice?"*, in *Didaskaleion*, NS, 3, 1925, I, 105-110; M. Caldi, *Ad versum 163 "De ave phoenice" carminis quod Lactantii fertur*, in *Bollettino di filologia classica*, 33, 1926-1927, 203-205; *Mary C. Brett, *Lactanti "De ave phoenice". An introduction, translation and commentary*, Thesis Cath. Univ. of America, Washington, 1930; *B. Bianco, *Il carme "De ave phoenice" di Lattanzio Firmiano*, Chieri, 1931; Mary C. Fitzpatrick, *Lactanti "De ave phoenice", with introduction, text, translation and commentary*, Thesis Univ. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1933; M. Leroy, *Le chant du Phénix. L'ordre des vers dans le carmen "De ave phoenice"*, in *AC*, 1, 1932, 213-231; C. Brakman, *Opstellen en vertalingen betreffende de Latijnse Letterkunde*, IV, Leiden, 1934, 234-251; M. Schuster, *Der Phönix und der Phönixmythus in der Dichtung des Lactantius*, in *Commentationes Vindobonenses*, 2,

main variations of the phoenix myth, but no one has made a systematic analysis of the problem of why there was so much interest in this bird in Classical times and indeed in the Middle Ages as well. If one examines the texts with this question in mind, it very soon becomes apparent that only a few authors have described the bird with the intention of writing natural history. In most cases the discussion or mention of the phoenix is concerned not with the animal world but with the human world; and it can only be concluded that the phoenix fulfilled an important function with respect to the meaning of human existence. It was primarily a symbol indicative of a reality beyond that of the individual but including him and forming the true basis of his existence. The phoenix could symbolize renewal in general as well as the sun, Time, the Empire, metempsychosis, consecration, resurrection, life in the heavenly Paradise, Christ, Mary, virginity, the exceptional man, and certain aspects of Christian life.[1]

This complicated Classical and Early Christian symbolism of the phoenix can be described only on the basis of a careful analysis of the phoenix myth. The primary aim of the present book is to provide this basis, since the previous studies have proved inadequate in this respect. In the past there has been almost no appreciation of the fact that the Classical and Early Christian traditions concerning the phoenix cannot be studied apart from the relevant symbolism. The phoenix not only acquired a variety of symbolic meanings but these in turn did much to enrich the myth. In the present study, consequently, considerable attention is given to the symbolism of the phoenix, not systematically or exhaustively but to the extent re-

1936, 55-70, idem, *Zur Echtheitsfrage und Abfassungszeit von Lactantius' Dichtung "De ave Phoenice"*, in *Wiener Studien*, 54, 1936, 118-128; E. Rapisarda, *Il carme "De ave phoenice" di Lattanzio*, 3rd ed., Catania, 1959; S. Gennaro, *Il classicismo di Lattanzio nel "De ave phoenice"*, in *Convivium Dominicum. Studi sull'Eucarestia nei Padri della Chiesa antica e Miscellanea patristica*, Catania, 1959, 337-356 (also printed in *Miscellanea di studi di letteratura cristiana antica*, 9, 1959, 1-18); *G. Crescenti, *Gli elementi cristiani del carme "De ave phoenice" di Firmiano Lattanzio*, Messina, 1960, 37 pp. (reviewed by G. Rochefort, in *REL*, 38, 1960, 376-377).

[1] In the cited literature the main symbolic interpretations are mentioned, although only incidentally and without analysis in terms of a wider context. The most extensive discussions in this respect are given by Zimmermann (see p. 6, n. 5) and Walla (103-118).

quired to explain the development of the myth or certain statements about the phoenix.

In all the variations of the phoenix myth several constant elements are to be found: a) the bird has a long life and shortly before or directly after its death makes an appearance in the world of man; b) by dying it obtains new life; and c) it is pre-eminently the bird of the sun. These subjects therefore predominate in the following analysis of the myth. An important factor in the present investigation is formed by the discovery that the phoenix had a symbolic meaning in the oldest and previously unexplained text in which the bird is mentioned, Hesiod, *frg.* 304, on the basis of which the main aspects of the Classical symbolism of the bird can be elucidated.

This discovery also threw new light on the problem of the origin and development of the phoenix myth. Various data suggest that the phoenix derives from the cultural complex of western Asia, which was dominated by Mesopotamia, although this does not necessarily mean that the main development of the myth did not take place in Greece. In the scholarly literature the origin of the phoenix and its myth have been sought chiefly in Egypt. Anyone who, like the present writer, knows himself to be anything but a specialist in the various cultures of the Near East, cannot help finding himself in difficulties when he considers the problem of the origin of the myth of the phoenix. As a consequence, the statements made here on this point are in no sense intended as definitive. They are made solely in the hope that others who are more competent to do so will undertake a study of this subject, as well as to provide some cautious indications, from the point of view of the Classical data, of the direction which such studies might take.

It proved possible, however, to correct a few misconceptions that have managed to persist among Classicists up to the present day. This made it necessary to discuss the relationship between the Classical phoenix and the Egyptian *benu* in the following chapter, again with the provision that this discussion is not meant to be conclusive.

In the final chapter an attempt is made to sketch the development of the phoenix myth in Classical and Early Christian times on the basis of the preceding analysis. A similar review is unfortunately

lacking in the major work of Hubaux and Leroy.[1] This last chapter also gives a summary of the results of the present investigation.

An attempt has been made to consider all the Classical and Early Christian texts concerning the phoenix. These include a small number not mentioned in the older literature on the phoenix. The outer limits set for this attempt to exhaust the sources were taken at Isidore of Seville in the West and Maximus Confessor in the East. From later periods only those texts are cited which distinctly reflect old traditions or clarify data in the earlier literature. In illustration of this we may mention, for instance, the *Disputatio Panagiotae cum Azymita*, which is of importance for the elucidation of the information concerning the phoenix in the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* and the *Slavonic Enoch*, as well as in a disputed passage in Lactantius' *De ave phoenice*.[2] A medieval Latin text which, like the *Slavonic Enoch* and the Byzantine *Disputatio* has never been referred to in a general study of the phoenix, is offered by Bartholomaeus Anglicus in his *De proprietatibus rerum*. As his source he mentions Alanus, but this tradition must have originated among the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt.[3] It is remarkable to note that certain texts were mentioned in earlier times and then evidently forgotten by later scholars. This was the case, for instance, for the important section on the phoenix in the *Descriptio tabulae mundi* by John of Gaza, which was cited by Bochart and even by the young Leopardi.

The most interesting new data are provided by the fragment of a Coptic sermon on the Virgin Mary and the birth of Christ, which is preserved in the library of the University of Utrecht. The text of this fragment, dealing almost entirely with the phoenix, is edited and translated in the third chapter.

In studying the myth of the phoenix in Classical and Early Christian times, one cannot restrict oneself to the literary sources. One must never lose sight of the fact that the phoenix took form in the art of the period as well. One of the shortcomings of the work of Hubaux and Leroy is their neglect of the problems associated with

[1] This has already been pointed out by M. P. Nilsson in his review in *Gnomon*, 17, 1941, 214.

[2] See below, Chapter VII, 2.

[3] See below, p. 117.

this phenomenon. Art constitutes an independent source of knowledge concerning the past. It not only often confirms the literary data but also can fulfil the function of a commentary and throw light on matters left in obscurity by the literary sources.

Consequently, attention is also given here to the phoenix in Classical and Early Christian art. As was found to be the case for the literary sources, here too it is impossible to restrict the investigation to the Classical and Early Christian periods. It is occasionally necessary to refer to medieval and even later representations of the phoenix to show the continued influence of older representations or to indicate how certain aspects given little attention in older times finally emerged in the Middle Ages and were then first represented in art. Much of this material has been known for several centuries, but few attempts have been made to give a lucid interpretation of it.[1] In recent decades especially, various representations of the phoenix have been discovered.[2] Since almost every representation of the phoenix has a specific symbolic meaning, its occurrences in art are of great importance for the study of the symbolism of the bird. This means that in this book, which is intended primarily as an analysis of the myth itself rather than of its various symbolic

[1] The most extensive collection of material is found in Türk, 3465-3472, and Leclercq, 686-691. An excellent and highly concise treatment is given by E. Josi, *Fenice*, in *Enciclopedia cattolica*, V, Città del Vaticano, 1950, 1151-1152. A rather superficial account is given by P. Boschi, *Un vecchio simbolo della nostra risurrezione*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 99, 1948, II, 19-28. E. Dinkler-von Schubert, *Phönix (in der Kunst)*, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., V, 1961, 358-360, unjustifiably interprets the phoenix in art almost exclusively as a symbol of Christ. Although very out-of-date in its details, an important work for the symbolism of the phoenix in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and later times is still that of F. Piper, *Mythologie und Symboliek der christlichen Kunst*, I, Weimar, 1847, 446-471. Marieluise Walla, 106-111, sees the phoenix in Classical coinage solely as expression of the concepts of the *Aeternitas* and *Felicitas* of the Empire; her comments on the phoenix in Christian art (116-118) go no further than those of Piper and Türk. For the literature on the individual Classical and Early Christian representations of the phoenix, reference is made to the documentation applying to the plates on pages 425-458.

[2] E.g. the liturgical garment of Saqqara (pls. II and III), various gems (pl. IX, pl. XI, nrs. 1-6), the mosaics of Antioch (pl. XXXI), Piazza Armerina (pls. XVIII and XIX), Edessa (pl. XIII), the graffito from the Vatican tombs (pls. XV and XVI), and the wall painting in the Cappella Greca of the Catacomb of Priscilla (pl. XII).

interpretations, the representations of the phoenix are discussed only where they contribute to the realization of the present intention.

Nevertheless, this study clearly shows the extent to which a symbolic meaning was given to the phoenix. The complex Early Christian interpretation of the phoenix offers a good example of the way in which a non-Biblical conception could function in the thinking and religious feelings of the Early Church. It will become evident that these Christian interpretations of the phoenix myth were based largely on its Classical symbolism. This is to be seen as an expression not so much of the spiritual imperialism of the early Christians as of their ability to preserve ancient conceptions deeply rooted in Classical culture, adapting them to their new experience of faith and life.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EGYPTIAN *BENU* AND THE CLASSICAL PHOENIX

The Classical reports on the phoenix provide some grounds for the assumption that the myth concerning this bird originated in Egypt or at least that a strong Egyptian influence on its early development must be taken into account. Herodotus says that his information about the phoenix was based on reports of the priests of the Egyptian Heliopolis.[1] This city also plays a large part in the traditions concerning the death and resurrection of the bird: the young phoenix brings his dead predecessor there to render him the last honours in the temple of the sun or the old phoenix undergoes there his fiery death and rebirth.[2]

In the nineteenth century the thesis of the Egyptian origin of the myth seemed to have been confirmed by the discovery that the ancient Egyptians in Heliopolis had indeed worshipped a sun bird that was called *benu (bnw)* and showed certain points of agreement with the Classical phoenix.

In the analysis of the phoenix myth we shall be faced more than once with the question of whether in the modern literature an Egyptian background has been correctly assumed for a given detail. Furthermore, anyone who examines the Egyptological literature on the *benu* will be struck by the fact that in the most recent studies by Classicists use is made of outmoded and even quite incorrect views about this Egyptian sun bird. It is therefore desirable to start here by reviewing the information about the *benu* provided by Egyptology. As has already been mentioned, for anyone who is himself unable to read the sources in question, this is a precarious undertaking, the more so since the results of the investigations carried out by Egyptologists differ, and the translations, which in any case offer only rather unsteady support, are mutually divergent. Nevertheless, the attempt must be made.[3]

[1] Herodotus, II, 73; see also below, p. 190-193, 401-403.
[2] See p. 146-150.
[3] In connection with the following review I wish to acknowledge my in-

Just how the *benu* was visualized in the time of the Old Kingdom is not entirely clear. It is usually assumed that it was thought to resemble the yellow wagtail. At a later period it was always represented as a heron bearing two long feathers at the back of its head.[1] In Roman times the Egyptian manner of representing the *benu* was merged with the Classical iconography of the phoenix.[2]

The *benu* played a role in the creation traditions of On-Heliopolis from the earliest times. There is a pyramid text in which it is considered, together with *kheprer*, the scarab (later called *khepri*), as one of the forms taken by Atum, the ancient god of Heliopolis, who was early associated with the sun god Re. In this text a relationship is established between Atum and the *benu* and between the hill which arose from the primeval waters at the creation and the so-called *benben*, a roughly conical stone in the temple at Heliopolis. The phoenix and the *benben* are respectively symbols of the god of creation and the hill of creation.[3]

debtedness to Professor J. Zandee (University of Utrecht), whose contribution of literature references and suggestions made it possible to avoid several serious misconceptions and omissions. Needless to say, I bear sole responsibility for the final result.

[1] For the various interpretations of the earliest and later representations of the *benu*, see e.g. Bonnet, 594. Good illustrations of the *benu* as heron can be found in such works as E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead, facsimiles of the papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerasher and Netchemet...*, London, 1899, pl. VIII; A Lothe, *Chefs-d'oeuvre de la peinture égyptienne*, Paris, 1954, pl. 63 (sarcophagus of Senedjem) and pl. 152 (tomb of Irenifer; see also here pl. I, 1); G. Posener, *Dictionnaire de la civilisation égyptienne*, Paris, 1959, 223 (tomb of Anchorchawi). A number of vignettes from the *Book of the Dead* with representations of the *benu* are given in E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, I, Berlin, 1886, pl. XXVIII (Ch. 17) and pl. XCV (Ch. 83). See also G. Roeder, *Die ägyptische Religion in Text und Bild IV: Der Ausklang der ägyptischen Religion*, Zürich, 1961, 342, fig. 27 (Rap. Rind).

[2] See below, p. 238-246.

[3] Pyramid text, no. 1652; another interpretation in R. O. Faulkner, *The Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford, 1969, 246, but see e.g. W. B. Kristensen, *Het leven uit de dood*, 2nd ed., Haarlem, 1949, 111; H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Aegypten*, Leipzig, 1941, 217; R. T. Rundle Clark, *The origin of the phoenix. A study in Egyptian religious symbolism*, in *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 2, 1949-1950, 14-16; *cf.* also J. Zandee in *BiOr*, 10, 1953, 113-114. For the primeval hill in general, see e.g. Kristensen, *o.c.*, 89-114 and A. de Buck, *De Egyptische voorstellingen betreffende de oerheuvel*, Thesis Leiden, Leiden 1922; for Heliopolis, 23-24.

The words *benu* and *benben* derive from the verb *wbn*, "to rise radiantly" or "to shine".[1] The concept that the *benu* rose radiantly from the hill of creation is also encountered in the *Book of the Dead*, 83, where the dead identifies himself with the bird and says: "I flew upward in primeval time (variant: "as a primeval god") and originated as *khepri*".[2] Here too, *khepri* and the *benu* are again forms of the sun god who appeared spontaneously at the creation. An epithet frequently applied to the sun god is "the self-generated one", and the same holds for *khepri*, the dung-beetle, which according to a wide-spread belief arose from spontaneous generation, and this determined its identification with Atum-Re.[3] As one of the forms of the sun god, the *benu* too acquired the predicate "self-generated",[4] and was called the "*ba* of Re".[5] In the Classical literature great emphasis is also put on the spontaneous generation of the phoenix and its close relationship with the sun.[6]

In the later Egyptian texts the *benu* is represented as perching on the sacred willow in the temple of the sun at Heliopolis[7]. But evidence that the relationship between the *benu* and the creation hill of which the *benben* stone was a symbol had not been lost is provided by a representation on a liturgical garment found at Saqqara and dating from Roman times: the *benu*, here unmistakably

[1] *Cf.* e.g. Kees, *o.c.*, 217; G. Jéquier, *Considérations sur les religions égyptiennes*, Neuchatel, 1946, 93; Bonnet, 594; W. Helck and E. Otto, *Kleines Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie*, Wiesbaden, 1956, 270.

[2] *Cf.* Rundle Clark, *o.c.*, 112 and Zandee in *BiOr*, 10, 1953, 110, the latter (109-115) argueing against the conclusions of the former.

[3] Bonnet, 270; Helck and Otto, *o.c.*, 337.

[4] See Bonnet, 595 and M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *De oudste versie van het Dodenboek, 17a, Coffin texts spreuk 385a*, Thesis Leiden, Leiden, 1963, 58, n. 120.

[5] Kees, *o.c.*, 52; Bonnet, 595; *cf.* also A. de Buck, *De zegepraal van het licht. Voorstellingen en symbolen uit den Oud-Egyptischen zonnendienst*, Amsterdam, 1930, 83.

[6] See below, p. 187, and chapter VII.

[7] *Cf.* e.g. C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*, Copenhagen, 1937, 128: "*Sie (i.e. the dead woman) ist "Hauch seines Mundesinnern". Sie ist der grosze, geheimnisvolle Phönix, der auf der Weide geboren ist im Phönixhause im groszen Fürstenhaus in Heliopolis"*; for other texts, see A. Erman, *Die Religion der Aegypter*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1934, 28; Kees, *o.c.*, 86; Rundle Clark, *o.c.*, 126-127; and Bonnet, 594-595. See also pl. I, 2.

identified with the Classical phoenix, is shown standing on a high hill that can only be taken as the primeval mount.[1] The phoenix on a rock or hill is also a rather familiar motif in Classical literature and art, and it was also often shown perched on a palm tree.[2]

The pyramid text referred to above also says that after his spontaneous genesis Atum created the first divine couple by spitting them out of his mouth: Shu, the god of air, and Tefnet, the goddess of moisture.[3] A sarcophagus text says that at his ejection Shu was wrapped in the breath from the throat of the *benu;* according to other texts he emerged from the mouth of Atum clothed in the breath of life.[4] Such statements provide further evidence that the *benu* is one of the forms in which Atum-Re manifested himself and that it was understood mainly as the life principle emanating from the sun god. The life-giving power of the breath of the *benu* is also alluded to in several other texts. In the *Book of the Dead,* 125, the dead says: "My purity is the purity of the great *benu,* which is in Heracleopolis, because I am this nose of the Lord of winds who gives life to all men".[5]

On the basis of these Shu texts, Rundle Clark regards the *benu* as the primeval soul and as such as the prototype of the individual soul.[6] However, Zandee argues, to the contrary, that this view is based on an erroneous translation and on a rather arbitrary combination of texts.[7] He holds the opinion that these texts only show clearly that the *benu* was considered to be closely related to Atum in his work of creation. The *benu,* according to him, is not a spirit

[1] See pls. II and III. Perdrizet, *La tunique,* 109 and Jéquier, *o.c.,* 95, interpreted the vegetation on the hill as small flames by which the *benu*-phoenix would be consumed. The elevation on which the *benu* stands was first taken as the primeval hill by Lassus, 105, n. 1.

[2] See below, p. 178-180 (rock) and p. 52-57 (palm tree).

[3] Rundle Clark, *o.c.,* 14; *cf.* A. de Buck, *Plaats en betekenis van Sjoe in de Egyptische theologie,* in *Meded. der Kon. Ned. Akad. van Wetenschappen,* Afd. Letterkunde, N.R. 10, no. 9, Amsterdam, 1947, 9 (223).

[4] Rundle Clark, *o.c.,* 118-122, and Zandee, in *BiOr,* 10, 1953, 115-116; also de Buck, *Plaats en betekenis van Sjoe...,* 20 (234).

[5] See Rundle Clark, *o.c.,* 122. Heracleopolis was the centre of the cult of Osiris; *cf.* Kees, *o.c.,* 321.

[6] See his conclusions in *o.c.,* 122.

[7] Zandee, in *BiOr,* 10, 1953, 115-116.

of life that reiterates itself from one generation to another. Although the dead did identify himself with the *benu*, this is only a derivative, secondary aspect, as will be shown. Primarily, the *benu* is a manifestation form of the god of creation and therefore of the sun god. It is the "*ba* of Re": the sacred animals were the "soul", the manifestation, of the gods to whom they were consecrated.[1]

It is possible that on the basis of its association with the sun the *benu* was also taken as the morning and evening star, Venus.[2] In the *Book of the Dead*, 122, it is said of the dead that he entered as a falcon and came forth as the *benu*, "the god of the morning" (or "the morning star"), that opens the way for him who enters the beautiful West in peace. The various translations of this text diverge rather strongly and show that it is possible that the direct connection with the *benu* does not even exist.[3] If the bird is really identified with Venus here, this connection must be determined by the close relationship of both with the sun.[4]

The texts from the *Book of the Dead* cited above have already made it clear that the dead could identify himself with the *benu*. In this identification the *benu* could be taken as the "*ba* of Re" that brings the elements of life to the realm of the dead. But in this context the bird could also be seen as a form taken by Osiris, the god of the realm of the dead. The New Kingdom knew a tendency to identify Re with Osiris, and therefore the *benu* could also be indicated as the "*ba* of Osiris".[5]

In this connection mention must also be made of the much discussed passage in the *Book of the Dead*, 17a: "I am this great *benu*, which is in Heliopolis, the inspector of that which exists".[6] Judged from the priestly commentaries incorporated into the text, the last

[1] De Buck, *Zegepraal van het licht*, 83; H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian religion. An interpretation*, New York, 1949, 96-99.

[2] Rundle Clark, *o.c.*, 23-24, 123-126.

[3] H. Kees, *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Ägypter*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1956, 259, translates this as: "*Ich bin als Falke eingetreten, ich bin als Phönix herausgegangen. O Morgenstern, gib den Weg frei, damit ich in Frieden in den schönen Westen eintrete*".

[4] The bird is here in any case not an astronomical symbol as assumed by Brugsch and Lauth; see below p. 28, and p. 29.

[5] *Cf.* e.g. Kees, *Götterglaube*, 86, 266, 321, 407, and Bonnet, 595.

[6] Heerma van Vos, *o.c.*, 18 and 59.

part of this statement has been interpreted in various ways. According to some, it refers to Osiris; according to others, it must be understood as "his (dead) body".[1]

The major problem here is what was meant by the commentary "that is his body". The most probable explanation is that it referred to the body of Re or, which is actually the same thing, to that of his manifestation as the *benu*.[2] The expression has been taken as referring to both Re and Osiris, the former conception apparently having been the original one.[3]

That the sun god had a body is known from several sources, among them the *Book of Gates*: "They burn in the house of the *benben*-stone near the place where the corpse of this god is".[4] Reference can also be made to the *Book of the Dead*, 85: "I see my father, the lord of the evening. It is his body that is in Heliopolis".[5] Underlying these texts is the belief that during his nocturnal journey through the underworld the sun god inhabits a body, which he leaves behind as a mummy when he rises in the East.

An unequivocal mention of the dead *benu* is found in a later version of the *Book of the Dead*, 64, which is translated by Allen as follows: "I have revived him who had fallen on his back, the phoenix whom the dwellers in their hall adore".[6] The word translated as "revived" has the literal meaning of "to make agreeable", "cure",

[1] *Ibid.*, 19-20, 60, 61.

[2] De Buck, *Zegepraal van het licht*, 84, remarks in this connection: "*Dat is eigenlijk het eenige spoor in de Oud-Egyptische bronnen van al de verhalen over zijn dood en opstanding, die den vogel zoo populair hebben gemaakt*" (*This is actually the only trace in the Early Egyptian sources of all the stories about its death and resurrection to which the bird owes its fame*); see, however, below.

[3] Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, 59.

[4] Translation by J. Zandee, *The Book of Gates*, in *Liber Amicorum. Studies in honour of Prof. Dr. C. J. Bleeker*, (Stud. in the Hist. of Rel. (Supplements to *Numen*), XVII), Leiden, 1969, 299; *cf.* also A. Piankoff, *The tomb of Ramesses VI*, Texts, (Bolingen Series, XL, 1), New York, 1954, 175: "*The dead see it while burning in the Palace of the Obelisk, at the place where the body of this god is*".

[5] For this text as a whole, see J. Zandee, *Hoofdstuk 85 van het Doodenboek*, in *Jaarbericht van "Ex Oriente Lux"*, II, 8 (1942), Leiden, 1943, 580-587, especially 585.

[6] Th. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead. Documents in the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago*, (The Univ. of Chicago Or. Inst. Publ., LXXXII), Chicago, 1960, 138.

and was also used to describe the embalming by which life was restored to a dead body.[1] This text thus alludes to a resurrection or an embalmment of the dead (fallen on his back) *benu*.[2]

Although the data are scarce, it may nevertheless be concluded that the notion of the dying and revivified *benu* was not entirely unknown in Egypt. It is dominated by the fact that the *benu* was one of the forms taken by Re, the god of the sun, who rises and sets each day. It is possible that the concept of the mummified *benu* formed the background of the tradition mentioned by Hecataeus-Herodotus concerning the transportation of the phoenix in an egg of myrrh.[3]

There are no indications that ideas about the *benu's* manner of dying and revival were developed in ancient Egypt. In the Classical view, death and resurrection form the core of the phoenix myth: the old phoenix dies and the young phoenix generates itself from its decaying body, or the old bird burns itself and the young one arises from its ashes.[4] It is clear that there are certain parallels and relationships between the *benu* and the phoenix, but it is not possible to demonstrate that the Classical views were based on the Egyptian, as some authors have assumed.[5] The problem this poses cannot be discussed until all aspects of the Classical phoenix myth have been analysed. The only author who wrote in Greek and clearly based himself on Egyptian conceptions in this connection is Horapollo, whose report on the phoenix assumes that the priests mummified

[1] *Cf.* A. Erman and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der aegyptischen Sprache*, IV, Leipzig, 1930, 185-186, s.v. *śnḏm*.

[2] The text seems to be anything but clear; an entirely different translation is found in P. Barguet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens Égyptiens*, Paris, 1967, 104, who follows an older text than that used by Allen: "...*celle qui était enceinte, elle a déposé son fardeau: Hyt a accouché devant celui qui est la tête en bas; la fermeture dans le mur a été renversée, c'est-à-dire le mal qui était tombé sur le dos du phénix. Vois, je t'ai été agréable...*".

[3] See p. 403.

[4] See Chapter VI, 3 and 4.

[5] Bonnet, 595-596, thinks it conceivable that the burning of the phoenix is to be traced to "*Legenden ... die von dem Erscheinen des Ph. in den Gluten des am Urbeginn aufstrahlenden Sonnengottes berichteten*". Kees, *Götterglaube*, 232, sees a different relationship: the myth "*verrät deutlich die solare Umstellung aus einer Naturmythe vom uranfänglichen Erscheinen des Wasservogels als erstes göttliches Lebewesen der Welt*".

the bird.[1] This may be a late echo of the tradition concerning the body of the *benu*, but it is also quite possible that Horapollo assumed this because he knew that in ancient Egypt the sacred animals were mummified after their death.

In Egypt it was natural for the dead to be identified with the *benu*, because from early times the bird had been a symbol of the creation of life. The original connection with Re or Osiris was not always explicitly mentioned but always implied.[2] In the Classical world the phoenix became a symbol of the rebirth of the soul and later, among the Christians, of the resurrection of the flesh.[3] Here again there are no indications that these notions developed from Egyptian conceptions, even though it has been assumed by some Egyptologists and others as well.[4] It is at least equally probable that this symbolism developed spontaneously from the Classical phoenix myth.

The name of the phoenix has also been considered to be derived from that of the *benu*, which has been taken as evidence of the Egyptian origin of the Classical phoenix myth. Sethe and Spiegelberg, followed by many others, have argued that the Egyptian word *benu* should be pronounced **boin* or **boine*, on the basis of the fact that in some texts the word is written as *bjn-w*. The name φοῖνιξ is therefore considered to be only a Greek version of the Egyptian term for the *benu*.[5] Several serious objections to this conclusion can

[1] Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, I, 35; see p. 198.

[2] See, e.g., Bonnet, 595. For other identifications of the dead with the *benu*, see the studies of Rundle Clark and Zandee, *passim*.

[3] See below, p. 132-145, 230-232, and 382, n. 1.

[4] E.g. by Bonnet, 595; also assumed, albeit not explicitly stated, by Rundle Clark, *o.c.*, 105-122.

[5] W. Spiegelberg, *Der Name des Phoenix*, in *Strassburger Festschrift zur XLVI Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner*, Strassburg, 1901, 163-165, thought that in later times but still before Herodotus the Egyptian words for *benu* and palm-tree were pronounced as **bene* (*cf.* the Greek word φοῖνιξ). K. Sethe, *Der Name des Phönix*, in *ZÄS*, 45, 1908-1909, 84-85, pointed out that the *n* in *bnw* is often preceded by an *i*: "*Diesen ägyptischen Namen boin haben die Griechen augenscheinlich nach gewonnter Weise durch die griechische Bezeichnung φοῖνιξ, die daran anklang, wiedergegeben*". W. Spiegelberg, *Zu dem Namen des Phönix*, in *ZÄS*, 46, 1909-1910, 142, convinced by Sethe, cited several Demotic texts supporting the vocalization **boin*. For the spelling *bojnew*, *cf.* also Roeder, *Die aegyptische Religion*, (see p. 15, n. 1), 334 and 335. Sethe's derivation is also found, for example, in Bonnet, 594, and

be put forward, but these must also be discussed further on.[1] Sethe's theory does explain, however, why Herodotus—or rather his source, Hecataeus of Miletus—was able to recognize the Greek phoenix in the *benu* of Heliopolis.

Lastly, we must consider the question of whether the *benu*, too, was thought to appear periodically in the world of men, since this is one of the most constant elements in the Classical tradition of the phoenix.[2] On the basis of investigations by Egyptologists it may now be considered certain that the *benu* was never a symbol of a Great Year of any kind, either in the sense of an exactly calculable astronomical period or in the more mythical sense of a complete cosmic rotation.[3] But traces of this symbolism ascribed to the phoenix in the Classical world are nonetheless to be found in the Egyptian literature.

In the so-called Fayum papyrus the *benu* is spoken of as "Lord of the Sed festivals".[4] The Sed festival played an important part in

Rundle Clark, *o.c.*, 3-4, 135. In the Bohairic translation of *Rev.*, vii.9, φοίνικες is rendered as *boine*. This cannot be considered a late, Coptic confirmation of Sethe's hypothesis, since the translator should have chosen the word *beni*, "palm", (*cf.* Crum, 40a) because φοίνικες indicates palm branches here. Instead, he understood this word as the name of a stringed instrument (*cf.* Liddell-Scott, 1948b, *s.v.* φοῖνιξ, IV) and therefore translated it as *boine*, "harp".

[1] See p. 61-66.

[2] See p. 67-72.

[3] For the Classical views concerning the Great Year, see p. 72-76. Rundle Clark states in many places (e.g., *o.c.*, 109, 122) that the Egyptian texts make no mention of a periodic appearance of the *benu*. Nevertheless he says (*o.c.*, 122): "*The basis of a belief in a phoenix period, then, both historical and mythological, was current during the Middle Empire if not before*". On p. 130 of the same work he assumes a relationship between the *benu* and the Sothic period (see below, p. 26-27). He finds an indication for this assumption in a text from Edfu, where reference is made to the "great greeting" spoken at the door of the temple of the *benu*. His views on the *benu* as herald of new eras are briefly summarized in his *Myth and symbol in ancient Egypt*, London, 1959, 245-249; *cf.* 246: "*the patron of all division of time*", "*the herald of each new dispensation*". See also footnote below for the views of Erman and Bonnet.

[4] This papyrus seems to be the only place in which the expression occurs; *cf.* W. Pleyte, *Over drie handschriften op papyrus...*, Amsterdam, 1884, 32; see also Erman, *Die Religion der Aegypter*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1934, 28, and Bonnet, 596. Because it was also translated as "Lord of the Jubilees", assuming at the same time that the Sed festival was celebrated at thirty-year

the ancient Egyptian ideology of the ruler, and was celebrated at irregular intervals.[1] At this festival the king renewed his royal office and especially its priestly aspect, but the latter of course meant a renewal of the kingship in general, because its various aspects were inextricably related. The accession of a new king meant a renewal of time, which was in fact a return to the beginning of creation, a restoration of the mythical Golden Age in which the relation between man and the gods was still harmonious. These notions also played an important part in the renewal of the kingship, and the Sed festival seems to have been intended to re-establish the disturbed relationship with the gods. It is therefore hardly surprising that the notion of the *benu* was thought of in this context, since this bird was such an old symbol of the creation of the world and of life. But because the Sed festival was celebrated at irregular times, it cannot have given rise to the notion of the periodic appearance of the *benu* after a fixed number of years.

The concrete representation of the primeval event also played a role in the celebration of the first day of the new year, at the beginning of the annual flooding of the Nile. The *benu* was associated with this important event[2] and this relationship is quite evident: at the creation the bird took flight from the primeval hill that was the

intervals, this expression was concluded to be an indication of a periodic appearance of the *benu*. According to Erman, this name refers to "*die uns auch von den Griechen überlieferte Vorstellung, dass der Phönix nach langen Zeiträumen wiederkehrte, nach 500 oder erst nach 1461 Jahren*". Bonnet too is of the opinion that the 500 years of the phoenix may be based on Egyptian conceptions, although he admits that this period could not have had any actual significance. Helck and Otto, *o.c.*, 271, say about the assumed Egyptian phoenix period: "*Ägyptisch ist eine solche Ära nicht belegt, wie auch nicht die Verbindung mit der Sothisperiode von 1461 Jahren*". The assumption of an Egyptian phoenix period goes back to hypotheses put forward in the eighteenth century, when nothing was in fact yet known about ancient Egypt.

[1] For the Sed festival, see e.g. Bonnet, 158-160, Helck and Otto, *o.c.*, 164-165, and especially C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals. Enactments of religious renewal*, (Studies in the History of Religions, XIII), Leiden, 1967, 96-123, especially 113-114 for the rejection of the terms Jubilee and Thirty-Year Festival (Bonnet) and 121 for the renewal of the priestly dignity of the king as the most profound and essential meaning of the festival.

[2] *Cf.* D. Wortmann, *Kosmogonie und Nilflut. Studien zu einigen Typen magischer Gemmen griechisch-römischer Zeit aus Ägypten*, in *BJ*, 166, 1966, 103-104, who points out that the bird was used as determinative or ideogram for "flood".

first thing to emerge from the waters of chaos. The flooding of the Nile recapitulated this occurrence: life could begin anew, which was also expressed in an increased number of births. This background clarifies the name given to children in the time between the Old and the Middle Empires: "the *benu* has come (back)".[1]

Here too it must be concluded that the Egyptian ideas about the *benu* contained in principle the notion stated explicitly in the Classical traditions of the phoenix and which formed an important aspect of the symbolism of the bird. But here again there is no evidence to support the assumption that the Classical views developed from the Egyptian. When we come to discuss the Classical concept of the Great Year we shall see that there too the notion of a return to the joyous beginning of the world, the Golden Age, was predominant.[2] This in turn exerted an important influence on the formation of the Classical myth of the phoenix.[3] The foregoing explains how easily the Greek and Egyptian notions about the phoenix and the *benu* could have merged in Hellenistic times. That this did occur is shown not only by the iconographical evidence but also by the Greek translation, made by a certain Hermapion, of the inscriptions on an Egyptian obelisk in which the word *benu* is rendered as "phoenix".[4]

In summarization of these data on the *benu* and in anticipation of the material to be presented concerning the phoenix, the following points of agreement and difference between the two birds can be listed:

[1] H. Ranke, *Zum Phoenix*, in *ZÄS*, 78, 1942, 54. This author, who first drew attention to this name, assumes that it perhaps may be concluded from it that in Heliopolis the return of the *benu* was expected, but with the qualification: "*Auf die Vorstellung von bestimmten Phönixperioden oder vom Anbruch einer neuen Ära können wir von hieraus allein freilich nicht schliessen*". *Cf.* also Rundle Clark, *Origin*, 108-109 and Bonnet, 596. In Achilles Tatius and Horapollo too, the phoenix is related to the flooding of the Nile, see p. 71.

[2] See e.g. p. 105.

[3] See p. 419-420.

[4] The translation is preserved in Ammianus Marcellinus, XVII, 4, 20: πληρώσας τὸν νέων τοῦ φοίνικος ἀγαθῶν. For this point, see A. Erman, *Die Obeliskenübersetzung des Hermapion*, in *Sitzungsber. der kngl. preuss. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Berlin*, 1914, 245-273. The obelisk of Hermapion came from Heliopolis. According to Ammianus, it was the one erected by Augustus on the Circus Maximus, which had also come from Heliopolis; it is now in the

1. The *benu* and the phoenix are both sun birds and both have been related to Heliopolis, although the latter is absent in a certain Classical tradition.[1]
2. The core of the myth in the Classical world, i.e. the death and revival of the sun bird, was not entirely unknown in Egypt.
3. A spontaneous generation was ascribed to both birds, although it is not defined in the Egyptian sources, in contrast to the major emphasis it receives in the Classical sources.
4. The names of the *benu* and the phoenix show some agreement, which may have contributed to their identification with each other.
5. With respect to their external appearance, there is no resemblance whatever between the two birds. Fusion of their iconography first occurred in Roman Egypt.[2]
6. Both birds were represented perched on a tree, the *benu* on a willow, the phoenix on a palm, in which connection it must be mentioned that for the phoenix this seems to have been determined mainly by the homonymy between φοῖνιξ = phoenix and φοῖνιξ = palm.[3] Both are also represented standing on a hill.
7. Both birds played a role in the symbolism of life after death.
8. Both the *benu* and the phoenix functioned as symbols of the events and conditions belonging to the beginning of the world, which repeat themselves at the commencement of each new

Piazza del Popolo in Rome (*cf.* E. Nash, *Obelisk und Circus*, in *MDAI*, Roem. Abt., 64, 1957, 235-237, Pl. 51; *idem*, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Rom*, II, Tübingen, 1962, 137-138, and C. d'Onofrio, *Gli Obelischi di Roma*, 2nd ed., Rome, 1967, 173-177, photos 75-79). It also carries the words: "*der das Phönixhaus mit seinen Herrlichkeiten füllt*" : *cf.* Erman, *o.c.*, 260 (J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Edition, London, 1950, 1, 328, erroneously translates the text of Ammianus as "*having filled his temple with the good fruits of the date palm*"). It is, however, impossible that Hermapion's translation concerns this obelisk; *cf.* Erman, *passim*, especially 269-270.

[1] See p. 147-149.

[2] See p. 15. Herodotus and others describe the phoenix as an eagle, and it is also compared with the peacock; see p. 251-253. For these reasons, G. Maspero, *Histoire des peuples de l'Orient classique*, I, Paris, 1895, 131, n. 2 and 136, n. 5, denied the identity of the *benu* and the phoenix. Furthermore, S. A. B. Mercer, in *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, London, 1949, 247, n. 51, says it is "*questionable whether we should identify the bnw with the phoenix*".

[3] See p. 52-57.

period. In the case of the *benu*, this must be related to the important role it played in the creation traditions as a manifestion of Atum-Re. For the phoenix, however, this symbolism is based on its connection with the Great Year.[1]

9. Although a periodic appearance after a given number of years is characteristic of the Classical phoenix, no similar phenomenon was ascribed to the *benu*.

In the present study an attempt will be made to demonstrate that the Classical myth of the phoenix is related to that of the Egyptian *benu* but did not develop directly from it.[2]

This review of the Egyptian ideas concerning the *benu* cannot be concluded without mention of a conception frequently encountered in the modern literature on the Classical phoenix myth, according to which the phoenix became a symbol of the Great Year because the *benu*-phoenix was a symbol of the Sothic period in ancient Egypt. Closer study shows that this view dates from the time when knowledge of ancient Egypt was still entirely dependent on the information provided by the Classical sources. For the phoenix, these were read as follows.

Herodotus states that he had heard from the Egyptian priests that the phoenix appeared every 500 years in the temple of the sun in Heliopolis to bury its dead father.[3] From this it was concluded that a "phoenix period" of 500 years played an important part in the thinking of the ancient Egyptians.

A somewhat conflicting but closely related view was found in Tacitus, who stated that the phoenix appears in Egypt at an interval of 1,461 years.[4] From another source this period of 1,461 years was known as the so-called Sothic period, which was indeed important in Egypt. The period of the Dog-star was considered to start when the first day of the ordinary civil calendar year of 365 days coincided

[1] See p. 414-417.
[2] See p. 397-399.
[3] Herodotus, II, 73; see also p. 68.
[4] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28; see also p. 70.

with that of the solar year of 365¼ days, which occurred after 1,461 ordinary years or 1,460 solar years. This astronomical period was named after the Dog-star *(Sidus caniculare, Sirius,* or *Sothis)* because in the first four years of the cycle this star rose on New Year's Day, at the first flooding of the Nile in the month of Thot.[1] The Sothic period was considered to be the Egyptian Great Year.[2] According to Tacitus and other sources, in Greco-Roman times the phoenix was apparently seen as a symbol of this Egyptian period, while on the other hand it was considered as a symbol of the Great Year.[3] Combination of these data led to the hypothesis—which before long was accepted as an established fact—that from very ancient times the phoenix had been a symbol of the Sothic period and that its association with the Great Year in the Classical world was based on this fact. It will be useful here to give a brief description of the history of this misconception.

In 1738, Alphonse des Vignoles formulated the hypothesis that the Egyptians had known an ancient Dog-star period of 487 years (the 500-year lifespan of the phoenix being a rounding off of this figure) as well as a later, great Dog-star period of 1,461 years, the one Tacitus related to the phoenix in agreement with the Egyptian practice.[4] Forster was of the opinion that the 500-years lifespan was to be attributed to an early, careless copyist of Herodotus, the original figure having been 1,500 years, representing a rounding off of the 1,461 years of the Sothic period.[5] This led to the concept "phoenix period", which haunts the nineteenth century literature—even the publications of Egyptologists—like a ghost. A

[1] For the Sothic period, see for example Ginzel, I, 181-195; Kubitschek, 93-97: R. Böker, *Zeitrechnung*, I, in *RE*, 2 Reihe, 9, 2, 1967, 2386-2394. For the chronological possibilities and difficulties offered by the Sothic period, see in addition to Böker's article also E. Drioton and J. Vandier, *Les peuples de l'Orient méditeranéen*, II: *l'Égypte*, 4th ed., Paris, 1962, 11-13, 15-17 and E. Hornung, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des Neuen Reiches*, (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, 11), Wiesbaden, 1964, 17-19; *cf.* also R. A. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 26), Chicago, 1950, 7, 51-54.

[2] Censorinus, *De die natali*, 18, 10.

[3] See p. 75.

[4] A. des Vignoles, *Chronologie de l'histoire sainte et des histoires étrangères qui la concernent...*, II, Berlin, 1738, 671-675.

[5] G. Forster, *Le phénix*, in *Kleine Schriften*, V, Berlin, 1796, 151-172.

great many studies were devoted to the exact determination of this period before it became evident that a false scent was being followed. The theory put forward by des Vignoles was adopted by Ideler in his authoritative chronological handbook, the phoenix period of 500 years being considered as constituting a third of the Sothic period.[1]

When ancient Egypt began to yield up its intriguing secrets, it seemed as though current assumptions concerning the phoenix were about to be confirmed: it was discovered that a sun bird called *benu* had been worshipped in Heliopolis from ancient times. Brugsch was the first to undertake a serious investigation of the relationship between the *benu* and the phoenix on the basis of the available sources. He viewed the *benu* as an astronomical symbol of the planet Venus and identified it with the Classical phoenix. He stated emphatically that the phoenix was a mythological bird, whereas the *benu* was a heron that was worshipped especially in Heliopolis and was the living symbol of Osiris. But he nevertheless assumed that many Classical data on the phoenix were also applicable to the bird *benu*.[2] This reasoning was repeated in Wiedemann's thorough study of the Egyptian phoenix in which he assumed, for instance, that the Egyptians had also known the burning of the sun bird. He made no reference to the so-called phoenix period, however, except to state that it is not mentioned in any of the Egyptian texts.[3]

But this valuable observation was not sufficient to eradicate the then almost 150 years old idea of an Egyptian phoenix period. A few

[1] L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, I, Berlin, 1825, 183-191; *cf.* also II, Berlin, 1826, 596. R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, I, Berlin, 1849, 180-196, gave a variant of Forster's view: he calculated a period of 1,505 or, rounded off, 1,500 years, of which the phoenix period constituted one-third. Unfortunately, the study by P. H. Larcher, *Mémoire sur le phénix* (see p. 6, n. 1) has attracted almost no attention; had this not been the case, much wild speculation could perhaps have been avoided. Larcher offers solid grounds for his argument that the phoenix was never the symbol of a chronological period.

[2] H. Brugsch, *Aegyptische Studien. Zur Chronologie der Aegypter, I: der Planet Venus*, in *ZDMG*, 10, 1856, 650-653. There was also an even earlier treatise on the phoenix, based on the discovery of the *benu*, by G. Seyffarth, *Die Phoenixperiode*, in *ZDMG*, 3, 1849, 63-89, the most bizarre piece ever written about the phoenix.

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Die Phönix-Sage im alten Aegypten*, in *ZÄS*, 16, 1878, 89-106 and *idem*, *Herodots zweites Buch mit sachlichen Erläuterungen*, Leipzig, 1890, 312-315.

years later, Lauth published a detailed discussion of this period, which he interpreted as a correction of the Sothic period. The burning of the phoenix, furthermore, was considered to represent the eclipse of the planet Venus by the sun.[1] Remarkably enough, these views held by Lauth had great influence on the modern Classical studies devoted to the phoenix, even though the extent to which the scientific work of this scholar was clouded by his unbridled imagination is rather generally known.[2]

Gradually, however, the lack of Egyptian and—on closer examination—also of Classical sources for the assumed astronomically computable phoenix period had its effect, and discussion of the subject ceased. This is reflected in Ginzel's extensive chronological handbook: he rejected all the relevant hypotheses and did not trace the Classical identification of the lifespan of the phoenix with the Great Year to the Sothic period, interpreting the equation with the Great Year at most as a general indication of a long lifespan.[3]

Thus, even before 1900, Egyptologists had determined that the *benu* had never been a symbol of the Sothic period in Egypt or of any other astronomical period. This has been confirmed by all the later investigations. We have already mentioned that on the basis of the available sources certain points of agreement can be found between the *benu* and the phoenix, but that this does not permit the conclusion that the Classical phoenix myth was developed from Egyptian notions about the *benu*. Nevertheless, this conclusion is continually accepted in the modern literature on the phoenix, just as is the old idea that the *benu*-phoenix was the symbol of the Sothic period even in ancient Egypt.

In 1936, the Classicist Sbordone published a study devoted to the

[1] F. J. Lauth, *Die Phönixperiode*, in *Abh. d. kngl. bayer. Akad. der wiss.*, Philos.-philol. Classe, XV, 1881, 309-396. Also E. Mahler, *Die Sothis- und die Phönixperiode bei den alten Ägyptern*, in *ZÄS*, 28, 1890, 121-124, saw in the phoenix period an astronomical allegory related to a period of 500 years.

[2] The fraud of the so-called *Benan letter* was easily exposed because of its author's diligent use of many of Lauth's errors; *cf.* C. Schmidt and H. Grapow, *Der Benanbrief. Eine moderne Leben-Jesu-Fälschung des Herrn E. E. von Planitz*, (*TU*, 44), 1921, *passim*; *cf.* also Brugsch's evaluation of Lauth cited *ibid.*, 18-19; on the phoenix in the *Benan letter*, *ibid.*, 72 (also influence of Lauth).

[3] Ginzel, I, 177-180.

phoenix in which virtually the entire myth was derived from the Egyptian data on the *benu*.[1] According to this author, the Classical view that the age of the phoenix and the duration of the Great Year were the same was determined by the ancient Egyptian view of the *benu* as a symbol of the Sothic period. He also uncritically adopted the theory of Brugsch and Lauth that the *benu* was a symbol of the planet Venus, even though Ginzel had already shown that this concept was astronomically inconceivable.[2]

It must be considered unfortunate that in their major work on the phoenix the Belgian scholars Hubaux and Leroy drew a great deal of their Egyptian material from the data collected by Sbordone from outdated Egyptological studies. They consider that the Egyptians knew not only the daily appearance of the *benu*-Venus but also the appearance of the bird at the commencement of the Sothic period. According to them, the Classical equation of the lifespan of the phoenix with the Great Year was based on the latter concept of the Egyptians,[3] and they cited Blochet, who in 1937 still maintained that the phoenix myth was an expression of the astronomical concept of the Sothic period.[4] With Sbordone, they read in the *Book of the Dead*, 64, that the *benu*, too, brought its dead father to Heliopolis, accompanied by a reverent escort of other birds![5]

Rusch was another author who paid little attention to the results of the serious analysis of the Egyptian material. He reports that the Egyptians took the lifespan of the *benu* as coinciding with one

[1] F. Sbordone, *La fenice*, 31-46.

[2] Ginzel, I, 178.

[3] Hubaux and Leroy, 14-20. However, they call the 500 years given by Herodotus a datum (p. 15) "*qui n'a de significance dans aucun domaine de la chronologie égyptienne*" (with reference to Wiedemann and Ginzel). They attempted to explain (18-20) how the Egyptian phoenix came to be identified with both Sothis and Venus: in Egypt, Sothis was consecrated to Isis, but in syncretism Venus too was equated with Isis. Consequently, the identification with Venus could not have taken place until Hellenistic times; they assumed, however, that this was the case in ancient Egypt too.

[4] E. Blochet, *Sur le phénix*, in *Le Muséon*, 59, 1939, 123-144; *cf.* 137: "*C'est le concept du cycle Sothiaque qui est traduit par le mythe du phénix*".

[5] Hubaux and Leroy, 162; Sbordone, *La fenice*, 36. The text is supposed to read: "*Fardeau agréable que celui qui est posé en équilibre sur les épaules du bennu, à la vue des oiseaux qui l'escortent*". For recent translations of this text, see p. 19 and 20, n. 2.

day, with one year, and with 1,461 years, and that the Egyptian identification of the phoenix period with the Sothic period led in Classical times to the conception of the phoenix as a symbol of the Great Year.[1]

The eighteenth century hypothesis of an Egyptian phoenix period related in some way or other to the Sothic period possessed unusual vitality. This is best shown by the fact that even in 1965, in his voluminous commentary on Tacitus, Koestermann apparently found no reason to refrain from stating that of the numbers 500 and 1,461 mentioned by Tacitus the first concerned the true phoenix period and the second the Sothic period, the two periods having been associated with each other because the phoenix period constituted a third of the Sothic period, i.e. was actually 487 but had been rounded off to 500 years.[2] We are left with the impression that there has been no serious scientific research on this point since the days of des Vignoles and Ideler.

Once again, in a recent study on Egyptian chronology, which was written by Böker, it is assumed that the Egyptians knew a "phoenix period" and also that the entire later symbolism of the phoenix had already taken form in the Egyptian notions concerning the *benu*.[3]

Lastly, Miss Walla is of the opinion that the Classical phoenix myth can to a great extent be explained on the basis of Egyptian concepts relating to the *benu*. According to her, this holds for the idea of the appearance of the phoenix at the start of a new era and also for that of its resurrection after death, which must be explained

[1] Rusch, 415-419. The only text cited by Rusch (418, *cf.* 415) for the ancient Egyptian conception that the phoenix-*benu* as symbol of the sun was related to the year, is that of the scholiast on Aristides, XLV, 107 (see p. 71). For the connection between the *benu* and the Sothic period he refers (418) to K. Sethe, *Sethos I und die Erneuerung der Hundsternperiode*, in *ZÄS*, 66, 1931, 3, where nothing is said about the *benu* as symbol of the Sothic period in ancient Egypt, reference only being made to the phoenix-Aion coins dating from the second and sixth years of the rule of Antoninus Pius (see also on this point p. 70 here).

[2] Koestermann, *Annalen*, II, 307.

[3] Böker, *Zeitrechnung*, I, (see p. 27, n. 1), 2424-2425, *cf.* 2425: "*Der Term "Verwandlung in den Benuvogel" ... enthielt die Vorstellung der Reinkarnation, Metempsychose, aionische Zeitwende, die Wiedererstehung aus Ekpyrosis, Fegefeuer, Selbstverbrennung, Scheiterhaufen*". Here too the abovementioned article by Lauth seems to have had its effect.

on the basis of the cult of Osiris.[1] Although she correctly denies that the Egyptians knew a "phoenix period", she is so deeply convinced of the Egyptian background of the phoenix that she assumes that the speculations about the bird's lifespan and the periodic appearances related to it must have originated in Egypt between 1000 and 700 B.C. (before Hesiod).[2]

We have gone into the old misunderstanding concerning an Egyptian phoenix period and the assumed relationship between the *benu*-phoenix and the Sothic period in some detail in order to demonstrate that no information on these points can be found in the Egyptian sources. From Tacitus and other Classical sources it is evident that in Graeco-Roman Egypt the phoenix was seen as a symbol of the Sothic period, but there are no indications that this was an old Egyptian notion that gave rise to the Classical identification of the lifespan of the phoenix with the Great Year. In the analysis of the phoenix myth that follows, we shall reach quite different conclusions. But before going on to this discussion we must first consider a Coptic text containing a number of previously unknown data on the phoenix.

[1] Walla, 51-52.

[2] Walla, 41, 43. Her discussion of the Egyptian ideas concerning the *benu* (1-51), which I first became aware of after this chapter had been completed (see p. 7, n. 1), gave me no reason to modify my conclusions.

CHAPTER THREE

A COPTIC TEXT ON THE PHOENIX

In January of 1956, the Utrecht University Library purchased a number of papyri and parchments from the estate of Prof. Carl Schmidt, the well-known student of Coptic literature.[1] This material included five parchment sheets written by the same hand and comprising pages 31-34, 41, 42, and 67-70 of the codex to which they had originally belonged. The last four of these pages contain part of an already known sermon ascribed to Theophilus of Alexandria (A.D. 385-412), on the *assumptio Mariae*.[2] The text on pages 31-34, 41 and 42 is part of a sermon on the Virgin Mary and the birth of Christ which requires our attention since it contains a remarkable

[1] The most important part of this collection was published and translated in the same year: G. Quispel, *An unknown fragment of the Acts of Andrew*, in *VC.*, 10, 1956, 129-148 (with fascimile), a German translation by G. Quispel and J. Zandee, is found in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, II, 281-285. Also published: G. Quispel and J. Zandee, *A Coptic fragment of the life of Eupraxia*, in *VC*, 13, 1959, 193-203; J. Zandee, *Iosephus contra Apionem. An apocryphal story of Joseph in Coptic*, in *VC*, 15, 1961, 193-213, G. Quispel and J. Zandee, *Some Coptic fragments from the Martyrdom of St. Pantoleon*, in *VC*, 16, 1962, 42-52 (all with Coptic text, a translation and a facsimile).

[2] Published by W. H. Worrell, *The Coptic manuscripts in the Freer collection*, (= Univ. of Michigan Studies, Hum. Ser., X), New York, 1923, 249-322 (text), 359-380 (trans). This sermon is also in the Morgan Collection, Copt. Ms. 600; see facsimile-edition in *Bibliothecae Pierpont Morgan codices coptici photographice expressi*, XVI, Rome, 1922; it is discussed by C. D. G. Müller, *Die alte koptische Predigt*, Thesis, Heidelberg, 1954, 190-191, 195-204 (see below, p. 38, n. 2 on the spuriousness of this text). The Utrecht pages 67-70 correspond to Freer, Washington Copt. Ms. no. 2, p. 67, col. a, l.10-p. 71, col. b, l.2 (ed. Worrell, 262-271) and with Pierpont Morgan, Copt. Ms. fol. 48^v, col. b, l.18-fol. 52^r, col. b, l.29 (facs.-ed. *tab.* 96-103). The Utrecht sheets were, according to a letter from Mrs. E. M. Husselman, dated 7-11-1956, to Professor G. Quispel, were offered for sale in 1930 to Enoch Peterson of the University of Michigan, who had them photographed but did not take up the offer. These photographs were sent to W. E. Crum, who used them for his *Copt. Dict.:* Utrecht, p. 41-42 mentioned e.g. on p. 363a, *s.v.* ⲥⲧⲟ and p. 568b, *s.v.* ϣⲏⲛ, *cf. ibid.*, XI under *En. Peterson*, with the comment "*originals not now traceable*". The photographs in Michigan indicate that in 1930 the sheet with p. 71-71 had been included, but its present whereabouts are unknown.

passage on the phoenix covering most of page 41 and all of page 42.

Three versions of this Coptic *Sermon on Mary* are known, all of them in manuscripts written in the Sahidic dialect and all of them fragmentary, but together forming a coherent section of the sermon that gives a good idea of the whole.[1] The greater part of this fragment is provided by Copt. Ms. 72(36) of the John Rylands Library at Manchester; six parchment sheets comprising pages 349-360 of the codex to which they belonged.[2] The Utrecht University Library's pages 31-34 coincide with Manchester, page 351, col. a, l.17 to page 355, col. a, l.6. The Utrecht page 41 begins at Manchester page 360, col. a, l.33 and starting at page 41, col. b, l.4 gives a part of the text not duplicated by the Manchester manuscript. Of the Manchester manuscript, only the part dealing with the phoenix has been published (page 360, starting at col. b, l.7).[3] The continuation of the Utrecht fragment is to be found in Kopt. Ms. no. K.9666-7 of the extensive manuscript collection of Archduke Rainer, now in the Austrian National Library at Vienna. This manuscript was inexplicably lost many years ago,[4] but thanks to Wessely's publication its contents are known.[5] Only two parchment sheets of this third manuscript of the *Sermon on Mary* have survived, and these are numbered in the codex as pages 39, 40, 44, and 45. Since the text shows no interruption, however, this numbering must be erroneous.[6] Page 39

[1] If in the codex to which the Utrecht sheets belonged only the *Sermon on Mary* preceded the sermon of Theophilus, the former must have occupied 61 pages of the codex. This is not an unusual length for a Coptic sermon. The surviving fragment would then represent not quite a third of the original text.

[2] See for this manuscript W. E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the John Rylands Library Manchester*, Manchester-London, 1909, 36; previously discussed and partially translated by F. Robinson, *Coptic apocryphal Gospels*, (*TS*, IV, **2**), Cambridge, 1896, XXII-XXIII, 196-197, 235-236.

[3] A. van Lantschoot, *A propos du Physiologus*, in *Bulletin of the Byzantine Institute*, 2, (= *Coptic studies in honour of Walter Ewing Crum*), Boston, 1950, 356; translated by Robinson, XXIII.

[4] According to Dr. Helene Loebenstein, "Direktor der Papyrussammlung", in a letter dated 13-4-1966.

[5] C. Wessely, *Griechische und koptische Texte theologischen Inhalts*, V, in *Studien zur Paläographie und Papyruskunde*, 18, 1917, 30-33 (no. 270). Also in Van Lantschoot, 356-357 (text and trans.).

[6] The conclusion of the Vienna Ms., p. 40, and the beginning of p. 44 contain a quotation from *Ps.* xliv.17 (LXX), see Wessely, 31-32.

of the Vienna manuscript begins at Utrecht page 42, col. a, l.7, and starting at page 39, col. b, l.14 continues alone. The remaining part of the Viennese page 39 contains the conclusion of the passage on the phoenix, but unfortunately is badly mutilated.

From the foregoing it is evident that starting with page 41, col. b, l.4 and running to page 42, col. a, l.6, the Utrecht manuscript contains a previously unknown part of the *Sermon on Mary* forming a link between the Manchester and Vienna fragments. To go into the relationship between these manuscripts would take us beyond the scope of this discussion,[1] but it may be mentioned that the Manchester text is written in a purer Sahidic than either of the other two and in cases of variants often seems to give the best reading.

Little can be said with certainty about the identity of the writer; the surviving fragment gives no indications on this point. There is also no certainty about whether the sermon goes back to a Greek original or was originally written in Coptic. The latter seems the more likely, but it also seems probable that the author made use of sources that originated in a Greek-speaking milieu. This holds in particular for the passage concerning the phoenix.[2] For a correct understanding of this passage we must examine in detail the dating of this sermon and the sources on which the phoenix passage was based.

The sermon was first delivered in a church consecrated to Mary, on the occasion of the celebration of the *Commemoration of Mary*. This fact is conveyed by the words of the preacher when, after his digression on the phoenix, he returns to his main theme: "Let us return to our subject and glorify the holy Virgin Mary, for we are gathered together in her sacred place because it is the day of her Commemoration, on which we celebrate a feast for her!"[3] The Commemoration celebration is the oldest Marian feast we know.

[1] According to present plans, the text of this sermon will be published as soon as possible after the appearance of this book, with an introduction, translation and commentary. Attention will also be given to several short fragments in Cairo and Paris possibly belonging to the same sermon but not relevant to the present subject. Permission for this publication has been obtained from the libraries in Manchester, Utrecht and Vienna.

[2] See below for the source of this passage and the note to the translation of l.22 of the text.

[3] Vienna Ms., p. 40, col. a, l.1-10, ed. Wessely, 31.

During the first decades of the fifth century it was celebrated in Constantinople, as indicated by sermons of Atticus and Proclus.[1] It was known in Egypt around the same time or possibly even earlier,[2] and in the course of the fifth century it was also introduced into Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, Italy, and Gaul.[3] Like many saints and martyrs, therefore, Mary too had a holyday.[4] The Commemoration of saints was held on their *dies natalis*, i.e. on the day of their death, the emphasis falling on the manner in which they had glorified God by their end. The Commemoration of Mary originally lacked this character, because neither the New Testament nor tradition provided any information about her death, but rather concerned her life, particularly its most important event, the birth of Christ, drawing mainly on the data on the Holy Virgin given by the Evangelists and the *Protevangelium Jacobi*.[5] The oldest Marian feast was thus also a feast of Christ, closely related to the feast of Christmas: in Constan-

[1] For this celebration see M. Jugie, *La mort et l'Assomption de la Sainte Vièrge*, (Studi e Testi, 114), Città del Vaticano, 1944, 58, n. 1, 174-180, containing a partial rectification of his earlier views; see Jugie, *La première fête mariale en Orient et en Occident. L'Avent primitif*, in *Échos d'Orient*, 22, 1923, 129-152 and *idem, Homélies mariales byzantines*, *PO*, 19, 1926, 297-317. Also A. Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée*, 3rd ed. by B. Botte, Chevetogne, 1953, 207-209 and L. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, 5th ed., Paris, 1920, 285. The sermon of Atticus of Constantinople (A.D. 406-425) preserved in Syriac has been published by M. Brière, in *Rev. de l'Orient chrétien*, 29, 1933-1934, 160-187 and by J. Lebon, in *Le Muséon*, 46, 1933, 167-202; for the sermon of Proclus, see *PG* 65, 680.

[2] *Cf.* Jugie, *La première fête*, 140-142; *PO*, 19, 305-307 and *La mort*, 179, n. 2.

[3] *Cf.* Jugie, *La première fête*, 140 and *PO*, 19, 300-305. For Antioch, see A. Baumstark, *Das Kirchenjahr in Antiochien zwischen 512 und 518*, in *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 11, 1897, 55; For the celebration in the West, see Duchesne, 285, Jugie, *La première fête*, 145-152, *PO*, 19, 309-317 and *La mort*, 195, n. 2.

[4] The connection between this commemorative feast and that of the saints was felt clearly, as indicated e.g. by the comparison Atticus made of the two (trans. Brière, (see n. 1), 181; *cf.* also Jugie, *La mort*, 176, and *PO*, 19, 300-301): "*Toutes les commémorations (ou Mémoires) des saints sont admirables; pourtant, sous le rapport de la gloire, elles ne le sont pas autant que la solennité présente*". E. Porcher, *Un discours sur la Sainte Vièrge par Sévère d'Antioche*, in *Rev. de l'Orient chrétien*, 20, 1915-1917, 416-423, published the beginning of a sermon by Severus delivered at the Commemoration of Mary, in which he calls upon the believers to worship the Holy Virgin as she who surpasses all saints (prophets, apostles, martyrs); the text unfortunately breaks off at the explanation of why she may be called a martyr.

[5] *Cf.* Jugie, *La mort*, 174.

tinople it was celebrated on the 26th of December,[1] elsewhere on a date shortly before of after the 25th of December or, in places where Epiphany was still commemorated as birth day, shortly after the 6th of January.[2] In the Coptic Church it fell on 21 Tôbi, i.e. the 16th of January.[3]

But this relation to the feast of Christmas characterized the Commemoration of Mary only briefly. Particularly after the Council of Ephesus in 431, where homage was rendered her as *Theotokos* in connection with the doctrine of the union of the two natures of Christ, Mary became increasingly important to the devout. No longer was she seen only in the light reflected from her Divine Son; after 431 her Commemoration was increasingly dominated by the holy *Theotokos* herself as indispensable link in the process of redemption. This growing independence of Mary can also be discerned in ecclesiastical art subsequent to 431.[4] The separation of the Commemoration from the celebration of the birth of Christ also demanded a far-reaching adaptation to the older commemorations of many saints, which shifted the emphasis from the birth of Christ to the death and ascension of the Virgin, based on the information provided by the *Transitus Mariae apocrypha*, which appeared at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century and spread very rapidly.[5] In this way the later Assumption of the Holy Virgin developed from the original Commemoration feast.

In the Coptic Church this transition was probably effected by the patriarch Theodosius (536-567), who on 21 Tôbi in 567 delivered a

[1] *Cf.* Jugie, *La mort*, 177 and C. A. Tryphanis, *An anonymous early Byzantine Kontakion on the Virgin Mary*, in *Byz. Zeitschr.*, 58, 1965, 327-332.

[2] *Cf.* Jugie, *La mort*, 58, n. 1 and 175-177.

[3] See the synaxaria mentioned in n. 1 of p. 39. A good example of the close relationship between the Christmas feast and the Commemoration of Mary is the sermon ascribed to Epiphanius of Cyprus *On the holy Virgin*, (ed. E. A. W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic texts*, London, 1915, 120-138 (text), 699-715 (trans.)), held "on the day of her holy Commemoration, which is the 21st of the month of Tobî". The author goes in detail into the list of generations in *Matth.* i, the annunciation, and the contact between Mary and Elisabeth.

[4] See G. A. Wellen, *Theotokos. Eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit*, Thesis Nijmegen, 1960, Utrecht-Antwerp, 1960, 139ff.

[5] See Jugie, *La mort*, 106-108.

sermon in which the idea of the *Transitus Mariae* is completely worked out. He was also probably responsible for the introduction of two celebrations marking the death and assumption of Mary, one on 21 Tôbi (the 16th of January) and the other on 16 Mesôre (the 9th of August).[1] These two dates have been maintained in the Coptic Church ever since, even though from about A.D. 600 on Mary's death and assumption have been commemorated everywhere else in the Christian world on the 15th of August.[2]

[1] This sermon was published by M. Chaîne, *Les discours de Théodose, patriarche d'Alexandrie, sur la Dormition*, in *Rev. de l'Orient chrétien*, 29, 1933-1934, 272-304; partial text and translation in Robinson, (see p. 34, n. 2), 90-127; see also James, *Apocr. N.T.*, 198-200 and Jugie, *La mort*, 128-133. From 536 on Theodosius was in exile in Constantinople, but he continued to consider himself the patriarch of Alexandria and to occupy himself with ecclesiastical affairs in Egypt whenever possible; see E. R. Hardy, *Christian Egypt: church and people*, New Yoik, 1952, 132-135, 139, 141-142, 149. It is therefore possible that this sermon and the inauguration of the double Marian celebration goes back to Theodosius. Jugie offers no support for his supposition that Theodosius was the inaugurator of the two Marian feasts. That this sermon gives a version of matters that was not generally known is evident from his statement that he found the story of Mary's death in old reports from Jerusalem he has come across in the library of St. Mark in Alexandria. This was an artifice frequently applied to ascribe an almost apostolic authority to an unfamiliar idea. Reference was usually made to information found in the library in Jerusalem; in the Coptic literature this was the case, for instance, in the sermon by Timothy of Alexandria on the angel of death Abbatôn (ed. E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic miscellaneous texts*, London, 1915, 513), in that of Archelaos of Neapolis on the archangel Gabriel (ed. H. de Vis, *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane*, Hauniae, 1929, 249). A similar case is that the *Apocalypse of Paul* was supposedly found in the house of Paul at Tarsus (see James, *Apocr. N.T.*, 526). These are all simply variants of the familiar book motif used so often in Antiquity to accentuate the ancientness and the authenticity of all kinds of extraordinary ideas: see on this point A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, I, Paris, 1950, 319-324.

[2] For the reasons for this date, see Jugie, *La mort*, 175-184. The sermon traditionally ascribed to Theophilus of Alexandria (see p. 33, n. 2) cannot possibly be by him because it was delivered on 16 Mesôre (ed. Worrell, 317-318 (text), 378 (trans.)). This sermon must have been composed in the time when it first became customary to celebrate the death and ascension of Mary on two different days, to which the writer objects (ed. Worrell, 281 (text), 367-368 (trans.)): "...since we celebrate her feast once a year, on the day of her holy Assumption (ἀνάληψις) which is the 16th of Mesôre, as transmitted to us by our blessed fathers, according to the word of the holy psalmist and our father David" (followed by *Ps.* lxxvii.3-4). It seems probable that this sermon originated in Melkite circles in which beliefs and ecclesiastical practices were kept as close to the Greek church as possible. For the relationship

On the basis of these data on the development of the Commemoration feast it is possible to date the sermon containing the passage on the phoenix approximatively. In this text the Commemoration still has the exclusive character of a general Marian feast in which a close relationship with the feast of the birth of Christ is immediately evident. The entire Manchester fragment is concerned with a detailed description of the events surrounding the birth of Christ in which the influence of the *Protevangelium Jacobi* is unmistakable. In all probability, the preceding portion of the text told of the birth and youth of the Holy Virgin as reported by the same source. The Utrecht fragment mentions the presentation in the temple, and in the following section, which is given by the Vienna Manuscript, the praises of Mary are sung with mention of many apocryphal details about her life. All this makes it improbable that the sermon was delivered in the period during which the Commemoration of Mary in the Coptic Church mainly concerned the death of the Virgin. In the sermons with the latter subject, the birth of Christ is at most briefly mentioned and never gone into in detail.[1] These considerations lead to the conclusion that the sermon with which we are concerned dates from after the rise of the Commemoration of Mary (about A.D. 400) and before the official introduction of the *Transitus Mariae* into the Coptic Church (A.D. 567).

But one of the few dogmatic statements occurring in this text

between the Chalcedonian and Monophysite groups in Alexandria and Egypt and the history of their patriarchs in the latter half of the sixth century, see Hardy, *o.c.*, 149-162. It remains possible that this sermon is a reworking of a sermon by Theophilus, which he could have delivered at the Commemoration feast. Further research on this point is needed in connection with the origin of the *Assumptio Mariae*.

[1] In the *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, for the 21th of Tôbi mention is no longer made of the life of Mary, only of her death and later assumption to heaven; see R. Basset, *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte)*, *PO*, 11, 1915, 621-624, or I. Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, (*CSCO* 78, script. arab., 12), Louvain, 1953 (= 1922), 360-361. The well-known sermon on Mary Theotokos ascribed to Cyril of Jerusalem (ed. E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic miscellaneous texts*, London, 1915, 49-73 (text), 626-651 (trans.)), reveals the transition from the old to the new conception of the Commemoration of Mary: considerable attention is paid to the descent and the life of the Virgin to refute the Gnostic idea, ascribed to the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, that Mary was a celestial power; her death is then described, but her bodily ascension to heaven is denied; see Jugie, *La mort*, 126-127.

makes it possible to narrow the period in which this sermon must be dated. In the Manchester fragment (page 355, col. b, ll.14-24 and l.35 to page 356, col. a, l.8, it is said that: "The flesh which the Son of God has assumed from the Virgin, that is it that shall sit at the Father's right hand between those who are elevated and that shall judge the living and the dead... God has come from Heaven, He has assumed flesh from the Virgin Mary. God became man, man became God; divinity and humanity became one!"

This passage proves not only that the author of the sermon belonged to the Monophysites but also gives an unequivocal indication of the faction to which he adhered. Soon after the spokesmen of the Monophysites had settled in Alexandria in 519 to insure their own safety, a schism developed among them. Whereas Severus of Antioch, in order to maintain that Christ had been truly man, set the deification of the flesh of Christ at his resurrection, Julian of Halicarnassus was of the opinion that this deification had started at the incarnation. Their followers coalesced into two violently opposed parties, the Severians and the Julianists.[1] Although the many positions intermediate between the two extreme views make it difficult to classify a given statement exactly, it seems certain that the author of the sermon in question must have belonged to the party of the Julianists or *Aphthartodocetae,* since he clearly emphasizes that the flesh of the deified Christ who will judge the living and the dead is the same as the flesh that he had assumed at the incarnation.

If this conclusion is correct, the sermon can be dated rather exactly: it must have been composed after the deification of the flesh of Christ had become a matter of conflict and before the Commemoration of Mary became in the Coptic Church the commemoration of the death of the Holy Virgin, which was first discussed and perhaps was even inaugurated by the Patriarch Theodosius, who was in fact a Severian. The sermon must therefore be dated between 519 (arrival of the Monophysite leaders in Alexandria) and 567 (sermon by Theodosius on the death and assumption of Mary). We shall therefore be fairly close to the mark if we assume that the sermon dates from the second quarter of the sixth century.

[1] *Cf.* Hardy, *o.c.*, 127-132 and e.g. F. Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte,* I-II, ed. K. Aland, Tübingen, 1959, 239-240.

This dating of the Coptic *Sermon on Maria* of course says nothing about the age of the sources used by the author. In a few cases it is evident that he has drawn on certain concepts, belonging to an earlier period, of whose original meaning he was ignorant. This holds for the passage on the phoenix, the only one we shall discuss here.

The writer of the sermon must have read in an older source that the phoenix had shown itself at the sacrifice of Abel, at the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and in the year of the birth of Jesus. The significance of these appearances will be discussed in detail below.[1] Here, it will suffice to remark that in these cases the phoenix is a symbol of the development of the history of salvation and that the appearance around the time of the birth of Christ has the same background as the choice of the 6th of January for the celebration of the birth (Epiphany). The earliest evidence we have of the celebration of the Feast of Epiphany dates from the fourth century, but its roots in Egypt are much older, since in the second century the Gnostic sect of the Basilidians celebrated the baptism of Christ in the Jordan on the 6th of January, this event having for them the same meaning as the birth from Mary for the orthodox.[2] We may safely assume that the connection of the phoenix with the sacrifice of Abel, the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and the birth of Christ is at least three centuries older than the sermon in which reference is made to it. But the Christian who first gave this interpretation of history could even have used certain pre-Christian, Jewish speculations, since as early as the second century before Christ we find in the Alexandrian Jew Ezekiel the Dramatist the statement that the phoenix showed itself to the Israelites after the departure from Egypt.[3]

The Coptic preacher mentioned these three appearances in his sermon without giving any indication that he was aware of their true meaning. He does give a symbolic interpretation of the phoenix,

[1] See below p. 119-130.

[2] See J. Zandee, *Gnostic Ideas on the fall and salvation*, in *Numen*, 11, 1964, 64-65 and J. Daniélou, *Les origines de l'épiphanie et les Testimonia*, in *Rech. de science rel.*, 52, 1964, 552. In this respect the Gnostics were probably influenced by the Jewish Christians who taught that the man Jesus became the Son of God at his baptism in the Jordan.

[3] See p. 121.

but one taken from the same source he drew on for several details about the bird that he wished to share with his audience. He says of the phoenix, "This bird points out to us the resurrection of the Lord". This interpretation is found only in the *Physiologus* and texts directly influenced by it; it has nothing whatever to do with the story of the three appearances.[1] The idea that the phoenix comes to life again after three days also occurs only in the *Physiologus*, and this is also the case for the implied notion that the phoenix lives in Lebanon and obtains from Paradise the perfumes with which it burns itself to ashes.[2] The report concerning the bird's food must derive from another source, perhaps a Jewish one: the idea that the phoenix lives on dew is found only in the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* and in *De ave phoenice* of Lactantius.[3] These data were inserted by the preacher after the mention of the burning of the phoenix together with the sacrifice of Abel, and he then, in logical progression, passed on to a description of the revival of the bird after three days. Only then did he go on to speak of the phoenix in more general terms, with the result that he was forced to mention its burning and resurrection for the second time.

According to the source used by the preacher, the phoenix had also appeared around the time of the birth of Christ. This must have been the reason for his inclusion in his sermon of the story of the three appearances, supplemented by a number of details from the *Physiologus*. But in mentioning this third appearance he resumed his report of the events surrounding Christ's birth, which had been interrupted by his digression about the phoenix. In the preceding part of his sermon he had gone into detail in telling the legend that Herod had had the priest Zechariah killed by murderers because he thought that it was the priest's son John whom the Magi had come from the East to seek. But no one could find John, because his mother had fled with him into the desert, and this was why Herod had ordered the killing of all the male babies in and around Bethlehem. This legend about Zechariah, John, and the Massacre of the Innocents occurs with a number of deviations in the *Protevangelium*

[1] See p. 130-131, 214-215.
[2] See p. 171-173.
[3] See p. 341, 348.

Jacobi,[1] in which it is also told that the priest Simeon was appointed in the place of the murdered Zechariah.[2] This and the story that follows, of the presentation of Jesus in the temple, are related by the preacher in connection with the appearance of the phoenix. This does little to clarify his argument and gives the impression that all these events occurred at the same time. It is possible, albeit with some difficulty, to translate the passage in this sense.[3] In the present translation, however, the mention of Simeon as successor to Zechariah, is considered as an independent remark that the preacher thought necessary as an introduction to the presentation in the temple and Simeon's subsequent prophecy. As the text now reads, the appearance of the phoenix is related to the presentation in the temple, but it remains a question whether this was the case in the source used by the preacher, which may only have said that in the year of Christ's birth the phoenix had appeared on the temple at Jerusalem.

The text and the translation of the passage on the phoenix and the section immediately preceding it are given here in full. From the latter it is evident that the preacher related these two passages very appropriately. In the critical apparatus the Manchester, Utrecht, and Vienna fragments are designated as M., U., and V., respectively. Where U. runs parallel with M. or V., the most probable or coherent variant has been used. Minor deviations are also indicated.

[1] *Protevang. Jacobi*, 22-24.

[2] *Protevang. Jacobi*, 24, 4.

[3] Van Lantschoot, (p. 34, n. 3), 357, translates: "*En l'année donc que Dieu naquit à Bethléem, et le jour dans lequel le prêtre Zacharie fut tué et Siméon mis à sa place, le phénix se brûla de lui-même sur l'aille du temple à Jérusalem*". Van Lantschoot of course knew only the Viennese text; in his translation the report of the tenth appearance of the phoenix after the sacrifice of Abel is related to the appearance during the time of Moses, which is certainly incorrect; see below, p. 123. It is clear from the Utrecht text that the tenth appearance was the one at the time of Christ's birth: "*In this year now the Son of God was born in Bethlehem*". To make a temporal clause of Simeon's succeeding Zechariah, an "and" has to be inserted before Simeon as Van Lantschoot has done *("et Siméon")*, although it does not occur in either the Viennese or the Utrecht texts. It can preferably be assumed that for the indicated reasons the redaction of the text is somewhat awkward.

TEXT

*M *p.* 360 *col.* a ⲁⲡⲣⲁϣⲉ ⲧⲁϩⲟ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲓⲕⲟⲩⲙⲉⲛⲏ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ̅ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉ*ϫ̅ⲡⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲭ̅ⲥ̅. ⲡⲉⲥⲛⲟϥ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛ̅ⲁⲃⲉⲗ ⲱϣ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϫⲓⲛ ⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲕⲁⲉⲓⲛ ϩⲟⲧⲃⲉϥ ϣⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲛⲟϥ ⲛ̅ⲍⲁⲭⲁⲣⲓⲁⲥ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲙ̅ⲧⲟⲛ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ. ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲇⲏ ⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲙ̅ⲡⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲛⲟϫϥ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲉⲓⲥⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲕⲉϣⲉⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲥⲁⲣⲝ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲥⲡⲁⲣⲁⲃⲁ ⲉⲓⲙⲏⲧⲉⲓ ⲛ̅ⲥⲉϫⲡⲟⲕ ϩⲛ̅ ⲟⲩⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲟⲩⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ̅ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ. ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲭ̅ⲥ̅ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲧⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ϫⲡⲟϥ ϩⲛ̅ ⲟⲩⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ̅ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲣⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲉⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲁϥϫⲓ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ϣⲏⲣⲉ

*U *p.* 41 *col.* a ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲣⲟϥ *ⲙⲛ̅ ⲧⲉⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̅ⲁⲃⲉⲗ ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉⲡⲉϥ-

*M *p.* 360 *col.* b ⲥⲛⲟϥ ⲕⲁ ⲣⲱϥ. ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲟⲩⲟ*ⲉⲓϣ ⲟⲩⲛ[a] ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲁⲃⲉⲗ[b] ⲧⲁⲗⲉ ⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ[c] ⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ[d] ϭⲱϣⲧ̅ ⲉϫⲛ̅ ⲧⲉϥⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲡⲁⲣⲁ[e] ⲕⲁⲉⲓⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲛⲏⲣⲟⲥ. ⲟⲩⲛ̅[f] ⲟⲩϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ ⲉϣⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ[g] ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϫⲉ ⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ. ⲡⲁⲓ ⲇⲉ[h] ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲕⲱϩⲧ̅ ⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲡⲉ ⲛϥ̅ⲟⲩⲱⲙ[i] ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̅ⲁⲃⲉⲗ ⲡⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ[j] ⲡϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲱϥ[k] ⲉⲧⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲡⲕⲱϩⲧ̅ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ[l] ⲣⲟⲕϩϥ̅[m] ⲛ̅ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲥ[n] ⲁϥⲁⲁϥ ⲛ̅ⲕⲉⲣⲙⲉⲥ[o]. ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲙⲉϩϣⲟⲙⲛ̅ⲧ[p] ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲓ[q] ⲛ̅ⲃⲛⲧ[r] ⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲕⲉⲣⲙⲉⲥ ⲙⲡϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ. ⲁϥⲡⲣⲟⲕⲟⲡⲧⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲓ[s] ⲕⲟⲩⲓ ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉϥⲣⲉⲧ ⲙⲛϩⲉ[t] ⲛϥ̅ⲣ̅ ⲧⲉϥϩⲉ ⲛ̅ϣⲟⲣⲡ̅[u]. ⲗⲟⲓⲡⲟⲛ[v] ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ϯⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ϣⲉ

*U *p.* 41 *col.* b *M *des.* ⲛ̅ⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ ϣⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲉⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ[w] ⲡⲉⲓⲛⲟϭ *ⲛ̅ϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ[x] ⲉⲓ ⲉϥϩⲏⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲛϥ̅ⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲣⲡⲉ[y] ⲉϫⲛ ⲧϣⲏⲩⲉ[z] ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲧⲁⲗⲉ* ⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ϩⲓϫⲱⲥ. ϣⲁϥⲃⲱⲕ ⲛ̅ϣⲟⲣⲡ̅ ⲉⲡⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲛϥ̅ϫⲓ ⲛ̅ϣⲟⲙⲛ̅ⲧ ⲛ̅ⲕⲗⲁⲇⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ϣⲏⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲥϯⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ ⲛϥ̅ⲕⲁⲁⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡϩⲟⲧ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ⲧϣⲏⲩⲉ. ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ϣⲁⲣⲉⲡⲕⲱϩⲧ̅ ⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ

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a) *om.* M b) U ⲉⲣⲉⲁⲃⲉⲗ c) U *add.* ⲙ̅ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ d) U ϣⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ
e) U ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲣⲁ f) *om.* U g) M ⲉϣⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩ h) *om.* M
i) U ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ j) *om.* U k) *om.* M l) *om.* U m) M ⲁⲩϩⲟⲕϩϥ̅
n) *om.* M o) U ⲛ̅ⲕⲣ̅ⲙⲉⲥ p) M ⲡⲙⲉϩϣⲟⲙⲧ q) U ⲁⲩⲕⲟⲩⲓ
r) M ⲛ̅ϥⲛ̅ⲧ s) M ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ t) M ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉϥⲣⲱⲧ ⲙ̅ⲙⲛϩⲉ
u) M ⲛ̅ⲕⲉⲥⲟⲡ v) *om.* M w) U ⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ x) M ⲡⲉⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ ⲡϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ y) U *om.* ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲣⲡⲉ z) M ⲧϣⲏⲟⲩⲉ

TRANSLATION

(1) Joy has come to the whole world (οἰκουμένη) because of the birth of Christ. (2) For (γάρ) the blood of Abel cries from the day that Cain (3) killed him to the blood of Zechariah[1] and the young children (4) who died together, because (ἐπειδή) God had said (5) to Adam, when He expelled him from Paradise (παράδεισος): (6) "You shall not be able to enter this place (τόπος) in the flesh (σάρξ) that has transgressed (παραβαίνειν), (7) unless (εἰ μή τι) you are born from water and the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα)".[2] For the sake (8) now (οὖν) of Christ, whom the Virgin (παρθένος) brought forth from the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα), (9) He has opened the gates of Paradise (παράδεισος); He has brought there the souls (ψυχή) of the children (10) of men and the soul (ψυχή) of Abel, so that his (11) blood became silent.

At the time now (οὖν) that Abel made a sacrifice (θυσία), (12) God had more (παρά) regard for his sacrifice (θυσία) than for [that of] the wicked (πονηρός) Cain. (13) There is a bird called phoenix (φοῖνιξ). (14) [As for] this [bird] now (δέ) —, when the fire came from heaven and consumed the sacrifice (θυσία) (15) of Abel the righteous (δίκαιος), the fire (16) of that sacrifice (θυσία) also now (δέ) consumed that bird at the same time [and] reduced it to ashes. (17) On the third day a small worm came out of the (18) ashes of the bird. It grew (προκόπτειν) little by little until it was covered (19) with feathers and had again assumed its former shape.

Further (λοιπόν), every (κατά) 500 (20) years the phoenix (φοῖνιξ), this great bird, comes flying in (21) the height, and it goes into the temple [and places itself] on the altar where they (22) sacrifice (θυσία). It goes first to Paradise (παράδεισος) and takes (23) three

[1] *Cf. Matth.* xxiii. 35, *Luke* xi. 50-51.

[2] Literally: "a Holy Spirit" (also in l.8). The passage contains an allusion to *John* iii.5 which in the Sahidic version reads "out of a water and a spirit"; here with the addition "holy", as in the Ethiopic version, several Old-Latin Mss., and some codices and editions of the Vulgate.

[3] Literally: "opposite" (Gr. ἔναντι, ἐπί + acc.); *cf.* Crum, *Copt. Dict.*, 718b. Since "opposite the altar" makes little sense (*cf.* l. 21), it seems probable that we are concerned here with a mistranslation of, for instance, καὶ τίθησι

ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲡⲉ ⲛϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲕⲗⲁⲇⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥϯⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ
ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ. ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲁϥⲣ̄ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲓ ⲛ̄ⲃⲛ̄ⲧ
ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ ⲛϥⲣⲉⲧ ⲙⲛϩⲉ ⲛϥⲣ̄ ⲧⲉϥϩⲉ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲣⲡ̄. ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲓϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ
ϯ ⲙⲁⲉⲓⲛ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ. ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁϥ
ⲛ̄ⲉⲃⲓⲱ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉϩⲣⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲱϣⲉ ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛⲁϥ
***U *p.* 42 *col.* a** ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩⲗϩ* ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ϯⲱⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲟ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲉⲃⲓⲱ
ⲧⲁⲓ ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲧⲉ ⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ ⲉϥⲥⲁⲁⲛϣ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ϯⲱⲧⲉ
***V *p.* 39 *col.* a** *ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲉϩⲣⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛϣⲏⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲗⲓⲃⲁⲛⲟⲥ.

ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲓⲛⲉ[a] ⲛ̄ⲛϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲏ̄ⲗ
ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲕⲏⲙⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧϭⲓϫ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲩⲥⲏⲥ ⲁⲡⲉϥⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ[b] ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ̄
ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲣ̄ⲡⲉ[c] ⲛ̄ⲱⲛ ⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏ. ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲁⲡⲥ̄[d]
ⲛ̄ⲛⲉϥⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲡⲉϥⲙⲉϩⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ ⲡⲉ ϫⲓⲛⲧⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ
ⲧⲉⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲁⲃⲉⲗ ⲉϥⲧⲁⲗⲟ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ. ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲓⲣⲟⲙ-
***U *p.* 42 *col.* b** ⲡⲉ[e] ⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϫⲡⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ[f] ⲙ̄*ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ[g] ϩⲛ̄ ⲃⲉⲑⲗⲉⲉⲙ[h].
ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϩⲱⲧⲃ̄ ⲛ̄ⲍⲁⲭⲁⲣⲓⲁⲥ ⲡⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄
ⲁⲩⲕⲁⲑⲓⲥⲧⲁ ⲛ̄ⲥⲩⲙⲉⲱⲛ ⲡⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ[i] ⲉⲡⲉϥⲙⲁ. ⲁⲡⲉϥⲫⲟⲓⲛⲓⲝ[j]
ⲣⲟⲕϩϥ̄ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁϥ ϩϫⲓⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲏϩ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣ̄ⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲑⲓⲉ̄ⲗ̄ⲏ̄ⲙ̄[k]. ϩⲙ̄
***V *p.* 39 *col* b.** ⲡⲙⲉϩϣⲙⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ ϫⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲡⲁ*ⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ[l] ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ[m] ϫⲡⲟ
ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ[n] ⲁⲥϫⲓⲧϥ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲓⲱⲥⲏⲫ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲡⲣ̄ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲁⲗⲉ[o]
ⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ϩⲁⲣⲟϥ ϩⲱⲥ ϣⲣ̄ⲡ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲓⲥⲉ[p] ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲡⲉϥⲣⲁⲛ
ϫⲉ ⲓ̄ⲥ̄. ϫⲓⲛ ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲛ[q] ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ[r] ⲕⲟⲧϥ̄[s] ⲉⲛⲁⲩ
ⲉⲡϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ϣⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ. ⲁⲩⲣ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣⲉ
U *des. ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲉⲓⲟⲧⲉ ϫⲉ ϣⲁⲣⲉ*ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϫⲡⲓⲟ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥϣⲙϣⲉ ⲉⲓⲇⲱⲗⲟⲛ
ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡ[ϩⲁⲡ?] ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲓϩⲁⲗⲏ[ⲧ ⲉ]ⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ϫⲉ
ⲙ[. . . .] ⲡⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲉ ⲉ[ⲡⲉⲓϩⲁ]ⲗⲏⲧ ⲙⲁⲩⲁ[ⲁϥ . . . .] ⲉⲧⲉϣⲁ[ⲣⲉ
ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄]ⲥⲁ ϣⲟⲙⲛ̄[ⲧ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ] ϣⲁϥⲱⲛϩ̄ [ⲛϥⲣ̄ ⲧⲉϥ]ϩⲉ. ⲉ[ⲣⲉ
ⲡϩⲁ]ⲗⲏⲧ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧ[ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ] ⲥⲩⲙⲁⲛⲉ ⲛ[ⲁⲛ ⲉ]ⲧⲁ[ⲛⲁ]ⲥⲧ[ⲁⲥⲓⲥ]
ⲟⲩ[. . . . .] ⲧⲟ[. . . . .]

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a) V ⲟⲩⲱϣⲉ b) V ⲁⲡⲉϥⲫⲟⲓⲛⲏⲝ c) V ⲡⲉⲣⲡⲉ d) V ⲧⲏⲡⲥ̄ e) V ⲧⲉⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ f) *om.* V g) V ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ h) V ⲃⲏⲑⲗⲉⲉⲙ i) *om.* V j) U ⲁⲡⲉϥⲫⲓⲛⲓⲝ k) V ⲑⲓ̄ⲗ̄ⲏ̄ⲙ̄ l) V ϫⲓⲛⲧⲁⲧⲡⲁⲛⲟⲥ m) *om.* V n) U *add.* ⲓ̄ⲥ̄ o) V ⲉⲧⲁⲗⲟ p) U ϣⲣ̄ⲡ̄ⲙⲓⲥⲉ q) *om.* V r) *om.* V s) V ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲕⲟⲧⲟⲩ

twigs (κλάδος) from the fragrant trees and lays them (24) on[3] the altar. Then the fire comes from (25) heaven and consumes the fragrant twigs (κλάδος) and the body (σῶμα) (26) of the bird. After three days however (δέ) there appears a small worm; (27) then it becomes covered with feathers and assumes its former shape. This bird (28) indicates to us the resurrection (ἀνάστασις) of the Lord. Just as (κατά) the bee (29) eats from the flowers of the field which are (30) wax to it, and from the dew of heaven which is honey to it, (31) so too the phoenix (φοῖνιξ) lives on the dew (32) of heaven and the flowers of the trees of Lebanon.

(33) At the time now (οὖν) that God brought the children of Israel (34) out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, the phoenix (φοῖνιξ) showed itself (35) on the temple of On, the city (πόλις) of the sun. According to (κατά) the number (36) of its years it was its tenth time since its genesis after (37) the sacrifice (θυσία) of Abel that it made a sacrifice (θυσία) of itself: in this year (38) now (οὖν) the Son of God was born in Bethlehem. (39) And on the day that the priest Zechariah was killed, (40) they installed (καθιστάναι) the priest Simeon in his place. The phoenix (φοῖνιξ) (41) burned itself on the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem.[1] On (42) the eighth day after the holy Virgin (παρθένος) had brought forth (43) our Saviour (σωτήρ), she took him with Joseph to the temple in order to make (44) a sacrifice (θυσία) for him as (ὡς) firstborn, [and] he was named (45) Jesus. From that moment now (οὖν) no one has ever seen (46) that bird up to this day. Our fathers have born witness:[2] (47) God shames the idol (εἴδωλον) worshippers (48) on the day of judgment (?)[3] because of this bird, because (49) ... you have not looked at this same bird ... which (50) after three days lives and assumes its former shape. (51) This bird now (οὖν) indicates (σημαίνειν) to us the resurrection (ἀνάστασις) ...

αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον. If this is the case, it would constitute evidence that at least this part of the passage on the phoenix goes back to a Greek source, probably a version of the *Physiologus*.

[1] For the translation of this passage, see p. 43.

[2] *Cf. Ps.* xcvii.7.

[3] *Cf.* e.g. Shenoute, ed. Leipoldt-Crum (CSCO, 42, scr. copt., ser. II, 4), III, 1908, 207, 12.

PART TWO

ANALYSIS OF THE MYTH OF THE PHOENIX

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NAME PHOENIX

The name "phoenix" has not yet been completely explained. Of the various meanings the word φοῖνιξ can have in Greek,[1] the following are relevant: purple, Phoenician, and date palm. These concepts were connected with the name of the phoenix in Classical times. In this section, a discussion of the Classical views will be followed by a consideration of the findings of modern etymological studies.

The explanation given by Isidore of Seville, which still finds acceptance, is that the bird was named for its purple-red colour.[2] The name is also associated with the colour purple in the medieval glossaries, although not in the same way: the phoenix was called "the purple one" because it was considered "the royal bird".[3] This probably arose from the medieval conception of the phoenix as a symbol of the king, representing particularly the unity of the king and his successor.[4]

A relationship between the phoenix and Phoenicia was also drawn in various ways, because of the similarity of the names. Ovid says that the Assyrians named the miraculous bird "phoenix".[5] We shall

[1] See Liddell-Scott, 1948, *s.v.* φοῖνιξ.

[2] Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22: *Phoenix Arabiae avis, dicta quod colorem phoeniceum habeat;* adopted by Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, 8, 6 (*PL* 111, 246A) and Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, I, 49 (*PL* 177, 48C). *Cf.* Honorius of Autun, *Speculum Ecclesiae, De paschali die* (*PL* 172, 936A): *Foenix dicitur rubeus.*

[3] *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, IV, (ed. G. Goetz, Lipsiae, 1889), 75, 11: *fenix avis regia;* 518, 15: *fenix avis regia unde finitium id est miniatum (nomen) accepit;* idem, V (Lipsiae, 1894), 199, 27: *fenix avis regia unde fenicium id est miniatum nomen accepit.*

[4] See the interesting discussion of this motif given by E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's two bodies. A study in mediaeval political theology*, Princeton, 1957, 385-401; for the same notion in the seventeenth century *ibid.*, 413-415 and figs. 22 and 23 showing phoenix medallions of Queen Elizabeth I (1603; inscription: *Unica Phoenix*) and of Charles I and Charles II (1649; inscription: *Ex Cineribus*); for the seventeenth century, see also H. H. Verstegen, *Het phoenixmotief. Bijdrage tot de studie van de humanistische visie op de vorst,* Thesis Nijmegen, 1950, *passim.*

[5] Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 393: *Assyrii phoenica vocant.*

see later that Ovid is almost the only one to mention the Assyrians in this connection: the phoenix is generally assigned to Arabia, India, or Ethiopia.[1] It seems likely that by Assyrians Ovid meant the Phoenicians, since in Classical times no great distinction was made between Phoenicia, Syria, and Assyria, particularly by the poets.[2] It may even be assumed that Ovid chose the word Assyrians for stylistic reasons, to avoid juxtaposition of the words *Phoenices* and *phoenica*. Because of the similarity of the names, he assumed that the phoenix would be a pre-eminently Phoenician bird. And after him Martial, without mentioning the phoenix directly, speaks of the fire that "burns the Assyrian nests whenever one bird has lived ten centuries".[3] In view of the fact that no other writer relates the phoenix to Assyria, it seems justifiable to assume that Martial was influenced by Ovid here and that he, too, meant the phoenix, the Phoenician bird.[4]

Whereas Ovid seems to have thought that the bird owed its name to Phoenicia, Lactantius conveys the reverse. He states that the phoenix goes to Syria to die, and that this is how the region came to be called Phoenicia.[5] But it nevertheless seems certain that Lactantius was influenced by Ovid, because a little further on he says that the bird builds its nest in a high palm tree which also owes its name to the phoenix. This is also to be found in Ovid, albeit without the explanation of the name.[6] The whole story of the flight of the phoenix to Syria and its death there in a palm tree—which does not occur anywhere else in the phoenix literature—was developed by Lactantius, under the influence of Ovid, from the homonymy of the Greek words for phoenix, Phoenician, and palm.[7] In these texts

[1] See p. 149-150, 305-307.

[2] *Cf. Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, II, Lipsiae, 1906, 940-942, *s.v.* Assyrii.

[3] Martial, *Epigr.*, V, 7, 1-2: *Qualiter Assyrios renovant incendia nidos, / una decem quotiens saecula vixit avis.*

[4] Lactantius Placidus, *Narr. fab. Ovidianarum*, XV, 37, here too follows Ovid: *Phoenix in Assyriae finibus nido ex odoribus facto, supra recumbit.*

[5] Lactantius, 65-66: *Dirigit in Syriam celeres longaeva volatus / Phoenices nomen cui dedit ipsa vetus.*

[6] Lactantius, 69-70: *Tum legit aerio sublimen vertice palmam / quae Graium phoenix ex ave nomen habet.* Ovid, *Metam.* XV, 396-397: *Ilicet in ramis tremulaeque cacumine palmae / unguibus et puro nidum sibi construit ore.*

[7] M. P. Nilsson assumes, in his review of Hubaux and Leroy, in *Gnomon,*

the relationship between the phoenix and Phoenicia does not seem to go any further than the assumed etymological similarity. Other than these sources, the Classical phoenix traditions contain little or nothing related to Phoenicia.[1] The only possibly relevant point is the statement in the *Physiologus* that the phoenix goes to Lebanon for its purfumes or even lives there. But this view can be explained by the Judaeo-Christian symbolism of Lebanon, although it may have been influenced to some extent by the similarity of the words phoenix and Phoenicians.[2]

We have just seen that Lactantius also drew a connection between the similar-sounding Greek words for phoenix and palm, in the sense that the palm owed its name to the phoenix because the bird built its nest in this tree. It is not certain but seems very likely that this homonymy also impressed Ovid, who gives the same story.

Isidore of Seville too derived the Greek word for palm from the

17, 1941, 214: "*Syrien ist wegen der Namensgleichheit zwischen Heliopolis-Baalbek und Heliopolis-On hineingezogen*", which seems very unlikely.

[1] F. Hommel, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen*, II, Munich, 1900, 217, 333, n. 1, 334, n. 1 and *idem*, *Ethnologie und Geographie des alten Orients*, (Handbuch Altertumsw., III, 1, 1) Munich, 1926, 83, n. 6, 86, 138, 158, n. 1, held the view that the Greek name φοῖνιξ indicated a Phoenician bird with an old autochthonous name. Since according to Herodotus, VII, 89, the Phoenicians "*according to their own report*" originally lived beside the Red Sea, i.e. the Persian Gulf, Hommel attempted to explain the name by all kinds of ingenious combinations from ancient Arabic. For anyone without a thorough knowledge of Arabic, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Sanskrit, his argumentation is impossible to check. He derives the name phoenix from the Old-Arabian *bulah* (from *bunah* = Eg. *benu*), with which the word for palm, *balah* (from *banah*), is said to be related; the Jewish bird *ḥôl* (the phoenix) is said to occur in *Hadramaut* as a messenger of the gods (but see below). Hommel's combinations require evaluation by a specialist; until then, a certain amount of scepticism seems justified. It will be shown further on that modern research too has led to a derivation of the Greek φοῖνιξ from a Semitic word, albeit on entirely different grounds. Hommel's views, together with many new and even bolder combinations, have been taken over by Frh. A. von Ow, *Der sagenhafte Vogel Phoenix in seiner Beziehung zu Christus und zum Pseudo-Heiland Hom*, in *Hist.-pol. Blätter f. d. Kath. Deutschland*, 140, 1907 (II), 575-577 (an extremely fantastic and confused article). O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, (Handb. d. klass. Altertumsw., ed. Müller, V, 2, 1), Munich, 1906, 389 (see also *ibid.*, 254, n. 4) thought that the Phoenicians had worshipped a deity called Φοῖνιξ by the Greeks, a deity to which the phoenix and the palm were consecrated and from which they derived their name. No supporting evidence is offered or has been found.

[2] See p. 307-309.

phoenix, but on very different grounds: the great age usually reached by the palm caused it to be named after the long-lived Arabian bird, the phoenix.[1] The learned Spaniard here indicates one of the actual points of agreement between the phoenix and the palm aside from their common name.[2] Nevertheless, before him the two are mentioned together only once in connection with their long lifespan. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 248-265),[3] summarizes a number of examples of long-lived animals and plants in his book on natural history and mentions the φοῖνιξ among the birds as well as among the trees.[4]

In Classical times, however, the relationship between the phoenix and the palm was also viewed in the reverse sense. Pliny had been

[1] Isidore, *Etymol.*, XVII, 7, 1: *Hanc (sc. palmam) Graeci phoenicem dicunt, quod diu duret, ex nomine avis illius Arabiae quae multis annis vivere perhibetur.* The connection between φοῖνιξ-phoenix and φοῖνιξ-palm is discussed elaborately by Hubaux and Leroy, 100-125.

[2] For the longevity of the palm, see Hubaux and Leroy, 103, n. 1 and Steier, *Phoinix, 1 (Palme)*, in *RE*, 20, 1, 1941, 391. Hubaux and Leroy, 103, mentioned as second point of agreement that some palms, according to Aristotle, *frg.* 267 (ed. V. Rose, Lipsiae, 1886, 210; H. & L. erroneously give *frg.* 246), were ἄνορχοι, i.e. had no pits and were therefore sometimes called eunuchs. This incidental report, taken over by Pliny, XIII, 41, can hardly be interpreted as a parallel of the asexuality of the phoenix. That the mention of the worm, which according to many texts represents the first developmental stage of the phoenix, arose from certain traditions concerning the fertility of the palm tree (*ibid.*, 103-104), is indeed extremely unlikely. Hubaux and Leroy also cite (p. 104) as points of agreement between the phoenix and the palm, the bird's fragrant nest and the palm species found in Saba, which, according to Strabo, XVI, 4, 19 exuded a sweet scent, plus the fact that the phoenix is predominantly purple and some kinds of dates are light red. These vague correspondences too convey little indication of a strict parallelism between the phoenix and the palm.

[3] See e.g. Quasten, II, 101-109.

[4] Dionysius of Alexandria, *De natura*, *frg.*, 3 in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, XIV, 25, 4: τὰ δὲ μακροβιώτατα ζῷά τε καὶ φυτά· ζῷα μὲν ἔν τε ὄρνισιν, ὥς φασιν ἀετοὶ κορακές τε καὶ φοίνικες ... δένδρα δὲ φοίνικες καὶ δρύες καὶ περσέαι. Hubaux and Leroy stubbornly call Dionysius *Denys Alexandre* instead of Denys d'Alexandrie (103, n. 1, 105, 136, 261). A relationship between the phoenix and the palm also seems to be implied in the *Physiologus of Vienna*, 4, which says that the phoenix is as large as the island Φοινικῶν, "*as the great Athanasius says*". See Hubaux and Leroy, 106-115, for the various places (not islands) thus termed; they assume (p. 108) that this *Physiologus* report indeed goes back to Athanasius of Alexandria, but there is no evidence to support this assumption.

told that the phoenix owed its name to the *syagrus* palm growing near Alexandria; it was said that only one of these palms existed, and that it died with the phoenix and would rise again from itself.[1] This tradition, which Pliny himself called remarkable and which may be a reflection of Alexandrian etymological speculations, gives the modern reader the impression that the relationship was just the reverse: the phoenix did not owe its name to the palm, but because of the homonymous names certain characteristics of the phoenix were transferred to the palm. Although the opposite is claimed, in this tradition the meaning φοῖνιξ-bird must be primary.

Even though the phoenix myth cannot be explained on the basis of traditions concerning the palm[2] or, conversely, the name of the palm be traced to the phoenix, it is understandable that this conclusion was drawn in Classical times, because besides the similar names and the long life ascribed to both, there are several other points of agreement, the latter lying more in the realm of symbolism. An example is found in the representation of the phoenix on a palm tree seen in certain traditional compositions of Early Christian art.[3] From ancient times the palm had been seen as a symbol of victory,[4] and the phoenix shown perched on it is not—as Ovid and Lactantius will have it—a bird preparing for its death but rather a symbol of eternal life in the heavenly Paradise where the redeemed have received the "palm of victory".

The points of agreement between the palm and the phoenix sometimes make it difficult to determine the meaning of the word φοῖνιξ

[1] Pliny, XIII, 42: *una (sc. arbor) et syagrorum, mirumque de ea accepimus, cum phoenice ave, quae putatur ex huius palmae argumento nomen accepisse, intermori ac renasci ex se ipsa, eratque, cum proderem, fertilis.* On the basis of this text Hubaux and Leroy, 117-121, explain the spectacular dish described in Petronius' *Satiricon*, 26ff., where Trimalchio serves his guests a large wild boar *(syagrus)*, as an indication that the host actually wanted to serve his guests a phoenix. This interpretation was rejected by P. J. Enk, in *Museum*, 52, 1947, 38-39. Elagabalus promised his guests a phoenix, or else 1,000 pounds of gold; *Hist. Aug.* 23,6: *fertur et promisisse foenicem conviviis vel pro eo libras auri mille, ut imperatorie eos dimitteret.*

[2] E.g. Bochart, *Hierozoicum*, (see p. 5, n. 1), 819, and J. Zideen, *Dissertatio academica de Phoenice ave, Åbo*, 1748, (after C. M. Edsman, *Ignis Divinus*, Lund, 1949, 179); also Ginzel, I, 178.

[3] See pl. XX, XXIV-XXX, XXXV, XXXVI,4, and XXXIX.

[4] See Steier, *o.c.*, 401-402.

in a given textual context. Clement of Alexandria tells of a religious procession in which an astrologer carried a clock and a φοῖνιξ in his hand as symbols of astrology.[1] Now, in the Egyptian syncretism of the imperial period the phoenix was seen as a symbol of the constant self-renewal of time and of the sun,[2] from which it might be concluded that the astrologer carried a representation of the phoenix. But this is made doubtful by the report by Callixenus of Rhodes that in a huge procession organized by Ptolemy Philadelphus around 270 B.C. there was a woman who represented a period of five years and carried in one hand a wreath of *persea* leaves and in her other hand a palm branch.[3] Horapollo stated later that among the Egyptians the palm was a symbol of the year because it gave forth twelve branches in a year, one in each month.[4] Lastly, Proclus claims that the palm is a symbol of the sun because its branches imitate the solar rays.[5] We must therefore conclude that it cannot be determined with certainty whether the astrologer mentioned by Clement held a phoenix or a palm branch in his hand, but also that it makes little difference with respect to the concept.

In the Greek magical papyri mention is made of νεῦρα φοίνικος, which could be translated as "fibres of the palm" or as "sinews of the phoenix".[6] Preference must be given to the latter, since according to Dioscurides the "prophets", i.e. the magicians, use this phrase to indicate the *habrotonon* plant.[7] It is highly unlikely that they would have given this plant a magic name that was borrowed from

[1] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.*, VI, 35, 4: μετὰ δὲ τὸν ᾠδὸν ὁ ὡροσκόπος, ὡρολόγιόν τε μετὰ χεῖρα καὶ φοίνικα ἀστρολογίας ἔχων σύμβολα, πρόεισιν.

[2] See e.g. p. 70 and p. 246-248.

[3] Callixenus of Rhodes, *De Alexandria*, *frg.* 2 (FGrH. III, C, 1, 168-169 = Athenaeus, V, 27 (198b)): φέρουσα τῇ μὲν μιᾷ τῶν χειρῶν στέφανον περσαίας, τῇ δ'ἑτέρᾳ ῥάβδον φοίνικος.

[4] Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, I, 3, see also p. 142.

[5] Proclus, *De arte sacra*, (ed. J. Bidez, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, VI, Brussels, 1928, 150): τὰ δὲ τὸ σχῆμα μιμεῖται τῶν ἀκτίνων, ὥσπερ ὁ φοῖνιξ.

[6] S. Eitrem, *Papyri Osloenses*, I, Oslo, 1925, 9 (pap. I, 156-157): δέδεται ἡ (δεῖνα) τοῖς νεύροις τοῦ ἱεροῦ φοίνικος, ἵνα φιλῇς διόλου τὸν (δεῖνα). On p. 26 Eitrem gives "*the fibres of the holy palm*", on p. 156 "*"the sinews of the holy phoenix-bird", i.e. the Egyptian benu-Osiris.*"

[7] Dioscurides, *De materia medica*, III, 24 RV (ed. Wellmann, II, 34): ἀβρότονον ... προφῆται νεῦρα φοίνικος, *cf.* Eitrem, 156 and Hubaux and Leroy, 115, n. 1.

another plant. The meaning of the expression is not entirely clear, but in all probability the *habrotonon*, as ingredient of a magic potion, was considered to prolong the desired effect.[1]

The homonymy of phoenix and palm caused confusion even in Classical times. This is made evident by the erroneous Early Christian interpretation of *Ps*. xci.13(LXX): "The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree". Various authors understood the word φοῖνιξ used in the Septuagint as phoenix, among them Tertullian, and with him Pseudo-Ambrose; it is also found in the *Untitled Gnostic treatise* and in the *Byzantine Physiologus*.[2]

[1] The quoted charm in the *Papyri Osloenses*, refers to amatory magic, which is why the *habrotonon* was called θηλυφθόριον by others (according to Dioscurides). This does not mean that a particular connection was drawn between the phoenix and the human amatory relationships. The traditions concerning the phoenix indicate only the contrary; see Chapter X.

[2] Tertullian, *De resurr. mort.*, XIII, 3; Pseudo-Ambrose, *De trinitate*, 34, (*PL* 17, 545A); *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, 170, 28-29 (ed. Böhlig-Labib, 97); *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10. Sixtinus Amamus, *Anti-Barbarus biblicus*, Amstelrodami, 1628, 835, pointed (that early) to this error and to the possibility that Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59 *(hoc relatione crebra et scripturarum auctoritate cognovimus)* could also have had *Ps*. xci.13 in mind: "*Procul dubio enim et iste ad hunc locum respexit*". O. Faller in his edition (*CSEL* 73, 281) mentions as second possibility that Ambrose "*Clementis Epistulam scripturarum auctoritate aequiperat*". Even before that, this view had already been rejected on good grounds by Harnack, *Neue Studien*, 607, who held the opinion that here *scripturae* must not be taken in the pregnant sense: Ambrose intended only a reference to the many oral and written witnesses respecting the phoenix. This indeed seems the most likely conclusion. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an error similar to that with respect to *Ps*. xci.13 was made in the translation of Plutarch, *De tuenda sanitate praecepta*, 20 (133c; ed. Paton-Wegehaupt-Pohlenz, *Moralia*, I, Lipsiae, 1925, 274), where ἐγκέφαλον τοῦ φοίνικος was taken as *cerebrum phoenicis*, although it means *medulla palmae*. Although already demonstrated by M. A. Muretus, *Variarum lectionum libri XV*, Antverpiae, 1586, 351-353 (*lib*. XIII, 12), we find the erroneous notion even in that great disbeliever in the reality of the phoenix Sir Thomas Brown, *Pseudodoxia epidemica, or Vulgar errors*, (1646), III, 12 (ed. Ch. Sayle, *The works of Sir Thomas Browne*, II, Edinburgh, 1912, 12). In this connection reference must also be made to what some scholars accept as a mention of the phoenix in *Assumptio Mosis*, I, 3. Here, the revelation to Moses is put, in addition to a number of other illegible time indications, in the ... year of the *profectio fynicis*. A. Hilgenfeld, *Volkmar und Pseudo-Moses*, in *Zeitschr, f. wiss. Theologie*, 10, 1867, 218, K. Wieseler, *Die jüngst aufgefundene Aufname Moses nach Ursprung und Inhalt untersucht*, in *Jahrb. f. deutsche Theologie*, 13, 1868, 630 and R. H. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, London, 1897, p. 4, *e.a.* translated this expression as "*departure of*

Regarded superficially, something similar seems to have occurred in the translation of the word *ḥôl* in *Job* xxix.18, which the rabbis understood as phoenix and the Septuagint and Vulgate give as palm tree. We must examine this point, because if the rabbinical interpretation is correct this text contains the earliest known mention of the burning of the phoenix as well as one of the earliest references to the phoenix myth in general. It would furthermore be extremely important that here we encounter the phoenix in a text that originated outside the Classical sphere of influence.

The text reads literally: "I thought: I shall die with my nest and multiply my days like the *ḥôl*". The problem presented by this text is the correct interpretation of the words *qên* "nest" and *ḥôl*. The explanation, and therefore the translation, must be based on the fact that in this text, as in almost all the verses of *Job* xxix, the poetical parallelism is applied, which in this case implies that the expectation of a long life is expressed in both parts of verse 18. Wherever it occurs in the Old Testament the word *ḥôl* means sand.[1] In itself the image of sand as an indication of a large quantity is not unusual[2] and may be considered appropriate for the multiplication of the days of a life, as is the case here. This is also the sense in which the word *ḥôl* has been translated in the *Targum on Job* and in the Syriac version.[3] But this creates a problem with respect to the word "nest" in the first part of the sentence. Taken literally, "Together with my nest I shall die" would imply a tradition concerning a bird that perishes with its nest after a long life, which would

the phoenix", but others give it as "*departure from Phoenicia = Canaan*" (i.e. of Joseph's family for Egypt). The latter is the correct rendition, *cf.* C. Clemen in Kautzsch, *Apokr. und Pseud.*, II, 318, n. *d* and *e* and 316.

[1] *Cf.* L. Koehler-W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros*, 2nd ed., Leiden, 1958, 282, *s.v. I* חול.

[2] *Cf. Ps.* cxxxix.18, Isaiah xlviii.19 and Habakkuk i.9. This usually appears as "the sands of the sea" or "the sand on the sea-shore" ..., *cf.* e.g. *Gen.* xxii.17; xli.49, *Ps.* lxxviii.27, *Jer.* xv.8. H. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, Jerusalem, 1957, 415 read for *Job* xxix.18 not יָמִים, "days", but יַמִּים, "seas", and assumed that this verse contained the expectation of a great posterity: "*and I thought: I shall die—with my nest (turned into) a nation and I shall multiply like the sand of the seas*".

[3] *Cf.* crit. app. to *Job* xxix.18 in R. Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, 14th ed., Stuttgart, 1966, 1136, various commentaries and e.g. Sister Mary F. Macdonald, *Phoenix redivivus*, in *Phoenix*, 14, 1960, 191.

make the translation of *ḥôl* as sand inconsistent. It would then be obvious to assume that in this context the word *ḥôl* must be given another meaning in better agreement with the first phrase. This is just what the rabbis did: they took the word *ḥôl* as an indication of the phoenix,[1] possibly influenced by the Septuagint, which gives the translation as: "I shall multiply my days like the palm tree (στέλεχος φοίνικος).[2] But this is certainly not necessary, because reasoning from the first part of *Job* xxix.18 one can conclude directly that *ḥôl* means the phoenix.

But this does not imply that the rabbis knew a typically Jewish or Western-Semitic version of the phoenix myth unrelated to the Classical tradition. In *Bereshit Rabbah* it is derived from *Gen.* iii.6 "She *also* gave her husband", that Eve offered the forbidden fruit to all the animals too. Only the bird *ḥôl* refused it, which gained it eternal life: "as it is written: I shall die with my nest and I shall multiply my days as the *ḥôl*". This is immediately followed by mention of two traditions concerning the death and resurrection of this bird, both of which clearly represent a recapitulation of the two main Classical versions.[3] We are therefore of the opinion that the rabbinical interpretation of *Job* xxix.18 proves only that the

[1] The texts in which this view occurs are given by Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, V, 51, n. 151. Many modern commentators have followed the rabbis in this; almost all of them are mentioned by Sister Macdonald, *Phoenix redivivus*, 192, n. 21. We refer here only to G. Hölscher, *Das Buch Hiob*, (Handb. zum A.T., I, 7), Tübingen, 2nd ed., 1952, 73, 75 and G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, (Kommentar zum A.T., XVI), Gütersloh, 1963, 402, 403, 410. Koehler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon*, 282, *s.v. II* חוֹל, too find a mention of the phoenix in *Job* xxix.18: "*evidently the bird Phoenix, but no etymology known*". *Cf.* also A. R. Hulst, *Old Testament translation problems*, Leiden, 1960, 82-83, and M. Dahood, *Nest and Phoenix in Job 29, 18*, in *Biblica*, 48, 1967, 542-544. W. F. Albright, *Baal-Zephon*, in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, (ed. by W. Baumgartner, a.o.), Tübingen, 1950, 3-4, thought the *ḥôl* occurred in the Ugaritic legend of Keret (*tabl.* C, II, 106). But this seems more likely to be based on an error, since the word which Albright renders as "phoenix" is translated as "circuit" by J. J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the O.T.*, Princeton, 1950, 148, and as "precinct" by J. Gray, *The Krt text in the literature of Ras Shamra*, Leiden, 1955, 21.

[2] LXX *Job* xxix.18: εἶπα δέ· Ἡ ἡλικία μου γηράσει, ὥσπερ στέλεχος φοίνικος πολὺν χρόνον βιώσω. *Vulg.*: *Dicebamque in nidulo meo moriar et sicut palma multiplicabo dies.*

[3] *Bereshit Rabbah*, XIX, 5 (trans. H. Freedman, *Mistrash Rabbah. Genesis I*, London, 1951, 151-152); see also p. 152 here.

rabbinical world knew the Classical phoenix myth [1] and that there is no evidence whatever to support the view that in this text the word *ḥôl* must be translated as phoenix. This is the reason why *Job* xxix.18 will not be referred to again in this book.

The translation of the Septuagint assumes a different reading than the Masoretic text offers, probably *naḥal*, palm tree.[2] In the unvocalized script, this word differs by only one letter from *ḥôl*. If the latter word was the original reading, it must be translated here and everywhere else that it occurs as sand, in the metaphoric sense mentioned above. The use of the word "nest" in the first part of the sentence then remains obscure if we take it in the literal sense, but it could also indicate that which is born in the nest, the young birds.[3] This is probably the case here. Job's meaning is then that he will not die until his children, who would also have reached an advanced age, have also come to the time of their death.[4]

It is therefore by no means certain that the rabbinical opinion that the phoenix is mentioned in *Job* xxix.18 was arrived at under the influence of the double meaning of the Greek φοῖνιξ. This seems to have been the case, however, for Pseudo-Bede, who in the early Middle Ages concluded that this text might refer to the phoenix.[5] Although it cannot be entirely excluded that he knew of the rabinnical exegesis, his choice of words gives the impression that his interpretation, which is unique in the Western tradition, was arrived at independently on the basis of the homonymy of the Greek words for palm and phoenix.

[1] For the use of Classical conceptions by the rabbis, see e.g. R. Meyer, *Hellenistisches in der rabbinischen Anthropologie*, (Beitr. zur Wiss. vom A. und N.T., IV, 22), Stuttgart, 1937, and G. Quispel, *Das ewige Ebenbild des Menschen. Zur Begegnung mit dem Selbst in der Gnosis*, in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 36, 1967, 15-16.

[2] *Cf.* crit. app. in R. Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, 14th ed., Stuttgart, 1966, 1136; L. H. K. Bleeker, *Job*, (Tekst en Uitleg), Groningen-Den Haag, 1926, 81 and 177, takes this to be the original reading.

[3] *Cf. Deut.* xxxii.11.

[4] Although Hölscher, 75, and Fohrer, 410, call this interpretation possible, they reject it because they see the *ḥôl* as the phoenix.

[5] Pseudo-Bede, *Expos. in Jobum*, II, 12 (*ad* xxix.18): *palma autem arbor secundum Graecos phoinix dicitur. Avis quoque quam multis saeculis quidem vivere autumnant, phoinix eodem nihilominus vocabulo nuncupatur. Potuit fortassis de eadem hoc loco dixisse.*

Lastly, mention must be made of some old explanations of the name of the phoenix that have nothing to do with the various meanings of φοῖνιξ. Two remarkable "etymologies" are found in the Viennese *Physiologus*. At the beginning of the section on the phoenix it is said that this bird received its name because it brightens (φανεροποιεῖ) the night by the cocks, which assumes a connection between the phoenix and the cock, a relationship which is not Classical and to which we shall return at length.[1] The passage closes with the statement that the name φοῖνιξ must be explained by the rapidity with which the bird resurrects itself (φύειν αὐτόν ὀξέως) within a period of three days and three nights.[2] We shall note on several occasions that the Viennese *Physiologus* contains a compilation of many motifs from various phoenix traditions. It seems unlikely that these explanations originated with the not very talented compiler, but we do not know what source they could have been taken from.

The second explanation offered by Isidore of Seville—in addition to the one based on the purple colour [3]—is more interesting: the bird might bear its name because in the entire world it is "*singularis et unica*". "For", says Isidore, "the Arabs call someone who is *singularis* "phoenix" ".[4] It is conceivable that this must be seen against the background of the Early Christian interpretation of the phoenix as the *virgo* that is completely *singularis*. We shall return to this point in another connection.[5]

Isidore's explanation of the name on the basis of the purple colour was until very recently accepted as correct in all modern etymological studies. The word φοῖνιξ was taken as a purely Greek word deriving from φοινός, "blood red",[6] having been used as an epithet

1 *Physiologus of Vienna*, 1: φοῖνιξ ὅτι φανεροποιεῖ διὰ τῶν ἀλεκτρυόνων τὴν νύκτα. See also p. 278.

2 *Physiologus of Vienna*, 33-35: φοῖνιξ δὲ ἑρμηνεύεται ἐτυμολογουμένως παρὰ τὸ φύειν αὐτὸν ὀξέως ἤτοι γεννᾶσθαι αὐτὸν ταχέως διὰ τριῶν ἡμερονυκτίων, τὴν τοῦ κυρίου τριήμερον ταφὴν καὶ ἀνάστασιν ὑπογράφων.

3 See p. 51, n. 2.

4 Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22: ... *vel quod sit in toto orbe singularis et unica. Nam Arabes singularem "phoenicem" vocant.*

5 See p. 387.

6 A. Wolf, *Lexikalische Streifzüge*, 5: φοῖνιξ, in *Glotta*, 5, 1914, 74-79; E.

for the people known everywhere for their manufacture of red-dyed products, the Phoenicians.[1] The phoenix supposedly acquired its name in the same way. Herodotus himself described the bird as having a predominantly red colour, and its name must therefore mean the "purplish-red bird".[2]

A very different explanation has been put forward by Egyptologists, in the first place by Sethe. According to this interpretation, the name of the phoenix is nothing more than the result of the Greek pronunciation of the name of the Egyptian sun bird, the *benu*, supposedly pronounced as **boin* or **boine*.[3] But this explanation failed to impress the Classicists;[4] and its improbability will appear from the following discussion. But we must not forget that Herodotus, or his source Hecataeus, recognized the Classical phoenix in the Egyptian bird of the sun. The explanation of this identification must be sought mainly in the similarity between the names.

The problem of the fundamental meaning of the name phoenix and the word φοῖνιξ in general was put in a new light when Ventris succeeded in deciphering the Mycenaean script, Linear B.[5] The Mycenaean texts contained the word *po-ni-ke*, with the plural form *po-ni-ki-pi*, from which the word φοῖνιξ later developed. In the first of the two texts to be cited on this point, there is mention of a chair inlaid with *po-ni-ki-pi* of gold and dark-blue glass.[6] The other text refers to a footstool with an ivory inlay depicting a man, a horse, an octopus, and a *po-ni-ke*.[7]

Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 2nd ed., Heidelberg-Paris, 1923, 1032-1033; E. A. Speiser, *The name Phoinikes*, in *Language*, 12, 1936, 121-126; J. B. Hofmann, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen*, Munich, 1950, 402.

[1] *Cf.* e.g. Hofmann, 402 and Speiser, 125.

[2] E.g. in Wolf, 75: "*So heisst auch der fremde Wundervogel seit Hekataios bei Herodot 2, 73* φοῖνιξ, *weil er nach Herodots ausdrücklicher Angabe zum grössten Teile rot war*".

[3] See literature cited on p. 21, n. 6.

[4] *Cf.* Hofmann, 402: "*z.T. mag fremder Einflusz vorliegen, so für* φοῖνιξ *Phönix, vgl. ägypt. byn.w Name dieses Wundervogels*" also Speiser, 123, n. 14.

[5] For a fascinating report, see J. Chadwick, *The decipherment of Linear B*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1967.

[6] M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, Cambridge, 1956, 344, no. 244.

[7] *Ibid.*, 345, no. 246.

Just as is the case for the later φοῖνιξ, there are several possible translations for *po-ni-ke*. In their major work on the Mycenaean texts Ventris and Chadwick admitted that the translation "palm tree" certainly belongs among the possibilities. But since it seemed more likely that all four figures on the footstool described in the second text would have been animals, they translated *po-ni-ke* as "griffin". One of their reasons for doing so was the consideration that little more can be deduced from Hesiod, *frg.* 304, the oldest mention of the phoenix in Greek literature, than that this bird was seen as a fabulous creature.[1] But in the Mycenaean culture the pre-eminent fabulous creature was the griffin, as can be judged from the frequency with which it was represented.[2] This translation has gained general acceptance, although most scholars leave room for the possibility that *po-ni-ke* meant the palm-tree.[3]

The important point is that in the light of the Mycenaean texts the derivation of φοῖνιξ from φοινός, "blood red", must be discarded.[4]

[1] *Ibid.*, 344 and 405.

[2] See e.g. C. Delplace, *Le griffon créto-mycénien*, in *AC*, 36, 1967, 49-86.

[3] Chadwick, *Decipherment*, 160, translates *Po-ni-ke-qe* in no. 246 of the *Documents* as "*and a griffin (or a palm tree)*", but on p. 92 as "*and a phoenix*". A. Heubeck, *Mycenaean qe-qi-no-me-no*, in L. R. Palmer and J. Chadwick, *Proceedings of the Cambridge colloquium on Mycenaean studies*, Cambridge, 1966, 230 translates the word as "*phoinix*" and says in a footnote " "*Griffin*" *or* "*palm-tree*"?" C. J. Ruygh, *Études sur le grammaire et le vocabulaire mycénien*, Amsterdam, 1967, 291: "*un griffon*". Only L. R. Palmer, *The interpretation of Mycenaean Greek texts*, Oxford, 1963, 351, 353 and 446, and F. M. Ahl, *Cadmus and the palm-leaf tablets*, in *AJPh*, 88, 1967, 191-192 have consistently chosen the meaning "*palm-tree*". Palmer, for obscure reasons, attaches great importance to the fact that the word *po-ni-ke* occurs "*in final position*" in the two texts in which it occurs: "*this suggests an accessorial motif*" (p. 351). He then adds: "*The palm-tree and its branches are one of the most frequent motifs of Aegean decoration. There is no evidence that* φοῖνιξ *ever meant* "*griffin*" *or* "*sphinx*" (see also Ahl) *and the interpretation ignores the diagnostic symptom offered by the final position*". It may be said in this connection that the griffin too was a very common ornamental motif in Mycenaean art (*cf.* the study of Delplace, mentioned in n. 2) and that there is no evidence whatsoever to support the contention that in ancient times the word φοῖνιξ could not possibly have been used for the griffin. See also below concerning the origin of the Mycenaean griffin.

[4] Ventris and Chadwick, *o.c.*, 405: "*Probably a loan-word: not from* φοινός "*blood-red*", *which is from * g^uhonjos*" (*cf.* Boisacq, *o.c.*, 1032). The Indo-European sound g^u was preserved in Mycenaean as *q*, and this form could be expected before *po-ni-ke* if that word were indeed related to φοινός.

But there is another word in Mycenaean, *po-ni-ki-ja* or *po-ni-ke-a*, which later became φοινίκεος and probably means "dyed crimson".[1] In fact, Ventris and Chadwick assumed that the word *po-ni-ke* was not originally a Greek word but had been borrowed.[2] In this connection, Phoenicia is an obvious possibility as the source.

This would shift the problem of the fundamental meaning of the word φοῖνιξ, and therefore of the name of the phoenix, from Greece to the Semitic world. In itself this is a realistic possibility, since several Semitic loan-words have been identified in Mycenaean.[3] This leads to the question of the word from which *po-ni-ke*, φοῖνιξ, was derived. Astour investigated this point and came to the surprising conclusion that the Greek φοῖνιξ can finally be traced to a word in Arabic and Hebrew meaning "madder", the red dye obtained from the dried roots of the herbaceous climbing plant *Rubis tinctorum*,[4] ground to a powder. Although we can add little to Astour's reasoning, we must go into this point in some detail.

In various places in the Old Testament reference is made to Tola and Pua as sons of Issachar (*Gen.* xlvi.13, *Num.* xxvi.23, 1 *Chron.* vii.1; *Judges* x.1 mentions Tola, son of Pua). Pua is written in two ways: פּוּאָה (*Judges* x.1, 1 *Chron.* vii.1) and פֻּוָּה (*Gen.* xlvi.13, *Num.* xxvi.23). The name Tola, taken literally, means "kermes" (red dyestuff), "crimson", and Pua means "madder" (Arabic: *fuwwa*).[5] The family of Pua were called פּוּנִי, Punites (*Num.* xxvi.23).

It is to say the least remarkable that two sons of Issachar, whose tribe lived in the northern part of Palestine close to the territory of the Phoenicians, had names indicating a red dye. And the family name *Puni* is particularly striking, because it is so strongly remi-

[1] Ventris and Chadwick, *o.c.*, 405.
[2] See p. 63, n. 4.
[3] Ventris and Chadwick, *o.c.*, 91, 135-136.
[4] M. C. Astour, *The origin of the terms "Canaan", "Phoenician", and "Purple"*, in *Journal of Near Eastern studies*, 24, 1965, 348-349, slightly more concisely in *idem*, *Hellenosemitica*, Leiden, 1965, 146-147.
[5] *Cf.* Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexikon*, 1021 and 754; *cf.* for Pua also M. Jastrow, *A dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic literature*, II, New York, 1950, 1138 and G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina, V*, Hildesheim, 1964 (reprint, = Gütersloh, 1937), 74-75, 87.

niscent of the Latin name for the Phoenician colonists in Carthage, *Poeni* or *Puni*.[1]

All this makes it indeed probable that the Greek word *po-ni-ke*/φοῖνιξ is ultimately to be traced to the Western Semitic term for madder, one of the red dye-stuffs manufactured by the Phoenicians and used by them to colour many products. This means that the name Phoenicians originally meant something in the sense of "those who work with red dyes" and was borrowed from the product for which they were famous. Conversely, the word Canaan, the autochthonous name for the region inhabited by the Phoenicians, has the meaning in Mesopotamia of purplish-red dye, whereas in Biblical Hebrew the word Canaanite became the equivalent of "merchant".[2]

This explains why the word φοῖνιξ can mean both purple and Phoenician. Consequently, the name of the phoenix can equally well mean "the Phoenician bird" and the "purplish-red bird". Although in the present state of our knowledge it cannot be definitively determined which of these meanings is the correct one, there are various indications justifying preference for the former.

Specialists have considered "griffin" to be the most probable translation of the word *po-ni-ke*. It is known that the griffin reached the Mycenaean culture from the Semitic world via Phoenicia; only the type of bird-griffin is found in Mycenaean art and this is the one known from Phoenicia.[3] This supports the assumption that *po-ni-ke*/φοῖνιξ signifies "the Phoenician bird".

In the next chapter we shall give detailed attention to the mention

[1] Hofmann, *Etymol. Wörterbuch*, 402, derives the Latin *Poenus* from φοινός. A. Walde and J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, II, Heidelberg, 1954, 330, see "*Poenus aus gr.* φοῖνιξ *hinzugebildet*". A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, II, 4th ed., Paris, 1960, 518, think "*que le mot ne vient pas du grec. Il s'agit évidemment d'un emprunt populaire*".

[2] *Cf.* Astour, *The origin*, 346-347, who cites S. Moscati, *Sulla storia del nome Canaan*, in *Studia Biblica et Orientalia*, 3, 1959, (Analecta Biblica, 12), 268-269.

[3] *Cf.* H. Prinz, *Gryps*, in *RE*, 7, 1912, 1911-1913, 1917-1918; K. Ziegler, *Greif*, in *Der kleine Pauly*, II, 1967, 876-877, and Chr. Delplace, (see p. 63, n. 2), 49. A. Furtwängler, *Gryps*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, I, 2, 1886-1890, 1745-1747, 1750-1753, sees many points of agreement with Egyptian representations but he too thinks that the griffin reached the Mycenaean culture via Syria.

of the phoenix in *frg.* 304 from Hesiod. In anticipation it may be said that this fragment is based on an ancient Eastern concept of the Great Year,[1] which must have reached Greece via Phoenicia and the Greek islands. It is possible that Mycenae also contributed to this transmission.[2] It is hard to avoid the impression that the phoenix can ultimately be traced to the Semitic world, which makes it highly unlikely that the name φοῖνιξ represents the Greek version of the Egyptian **boine*.

It remains possible, however, that to the Greeks of *ca.* 1200 B.C., *po-ni-ke* suggested a different creature than φοῖνιξ suggested to the later Greeks. If this was actually the case, the Classical phoenix myth must have developed in the Greek world after the Mycenaean period. It seems certain in any case that in his time Hesiod made a distinction between the phoenix and the griffin.[3] This makes it probable that Herodotus ascribed the red colour to the phoenix because the same word could mean purple. This brings us to the problem of the earliest development of the phoenix myth, which, however, will be discussed in the final chapter of this book.

[1] See p. 90-97.
[2] See p. 111-112.
[3] See p. 397.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIFESPAN AND APPEARANCES

1. The Age of the Phoenix and the Great Year

One of the oldest components of the phoenix myth is the fixed cycle: after a given period, which is always of the same length, it dies and then arises again from its own remains. Just before or after its death it makes an appearance in the world of man, which is greeted as an important event. It was universally believed that the period encompassed by the phoenix's life was a very long one. Its great age became proverbial,[1] but opinion differed on the exact number of years and a number of writers restricted themselves to the statement that the bird only renewed itself after a very long time—many years or centuries.[2] Even as early an author as Tacitus pointed out that there were different traditions concerning the age of the phoenix,[3] and this divergence led Aelian to contrast the

[1] Lucian, *Hermotimus*, 53: ἢν μὴ φοίνικος ἔτη βιώσῃ. Extraordinary events were compared with the phoenix: in addition to Aristides, *Orat.*, XLV, 107, Synesius, *Dio*, 9, 3 and Themistius, *Orat.*, XXXIII (367c) (see below p. 71, n. 1 and n. 2) we may mention Seneca, *Epist. Mor.*, XLII, 1 in a discussion of the truly good man: *Scis quem nunc virum bonum dicam? Huius secundae notae. Nam ille alter fortasse tamquam phoenix semel anno quingentesimo nascitur,* and Martial, *Epigr.*, V, 37, 12-13, speaking of a slave who had died before reaching her sixth year: *Cui conparatus indecens erat pavo, / inamabilis sciurus et frequens phoenix;* Libanius, *Orat.*, XVII, 10, compares the short reign of Julian with the short appearance of the phoenix in our world; in this connection he states emphatically that the bird can be seen only vaguely by men: διὰ πάσης μὲν τῆς γῆς ἐκτεῖναι τὴν πτῆσιν, στῆναι δὲ μηδαμοῦ μήτε ἀγρῶν μήτε ἄστεων. Ἀμυδρὰ γὰρ οὕτως ἂν ἐγένετο τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἡ τοῦ ὄρνιθος ὄψις.

[2] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 4: σὺν χρόνῳ ... μακρῷ; Celsus in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 98; διὰ πολλῶν ἔτων; Dionysius of Alexandria in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, XIV, 25, 4 mentions the phoenix among τὰ μακραβιώτατα ζῷα; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina*, I, 2, 527 (*PG* 37, 620A): πολλῶν ἔτων μετὰ κύκλα; Dracontius, *Romulea*, X, 106: *post saecla;* Eugenius, *Carmina*, XLIV; *immensi temporis ales;* Pseudo-Bede, *Expositio in Iobum*, II, 12: *post multa tempora.*

[3] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *De numero annorum varia traduntur. Maxime vulgatum quingentorum spatium; sunt qui adseverent mille quadringentos sexaginta unum interici.*

phoenix's natural cognizance of the right time for its appearance with the confused opinions and calculations of men.[1]

Tacitus says that according to the most widely accepted opinion the phoenix lived 500 years.[2] The correctness of this statement is abundantly confirmed by the texts. The period of 500 years is found first in Herodotus, who explicitly states that this figure derives from the priests of Heliopolis.[3] It should be mentioned in this connection that according to a report of Porphyry transmitted by Eusebius, Herodotus took his information about the phoenix word for word, albeit with abbreviation, from the *Periegesis* of Hecataeus of Miletes (*ca.* 500 B.C.).[4] This report is important for the evaluation of Herodotus' statements about the phoenix.[5] After Herodotus, the first to mention the 500 years of the phoenix was Ovid; and this interval was indeed accepted by most of the later authors.[6]

In Isidore of Seville and the medieval writers who followed him, the phoenix is said to live more than 500 years.[7] Isidore must have had in mind the period mentioned by the Roman Senator Manilius, who wrote at the beginning for the first century B.C.[8] and was

[1] Aelian, *De nat. animal.*, VI, 58: Ἄνευ δὲ λογιστικῆς οἱ φοίνικες συμβαλεῖν ἐτῶν πεντακοσίων ἴσασιν ἀριθμόν, μαθηταὶ φύσεως τῆς σωφωτάτης ὄντες.

[2] See above, p. 67, n. 3.

[3] Herodotus, II, 73, 1: καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ σπάνιος ἐπιφοιτᾷ σφι δι' ἐτέων, ὡς Ἡλιοπολῖται λέγουσι, πεντακοσίων.

[4] Porphyry in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* X, 3, 16: see also p. 394, n. 1.

[5] See p. 401.

[6] Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 395: *Haec ubi quinque suae complevit saecula vitae.* Mela, *Chorogr.*, III, 83; Seneca, *Epist. Mor.*, XLII, 1; *1 Clement*, 25; Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III, 49; Aelianus, *De nat. animal.*, VI, 58; *Didascalia*, 40; *Constit. Apostol.*, V, 7, 15; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B); Aurelius Victor, *De caesaribus*, IV, 14; Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84; Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, II, 59; *idem, Exameron*, V, 23, 79; Copt. *Sermon on Mary*, 19-20. Lactantius Placidus, *Narrat. fab. Ovidian.*, XV, 37; Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* (*PG* 85, 980A); Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11; Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, I, 35; Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaem.* (*PG* 18, 732A); *Greek Physiologus*, 7 (also in all the later versions and translations; but see also the related text on p. 69, n. 6).

[7] Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22: *quingentis ultra vivens.* Repeated in Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, VIII, 6 (*PL* 111, 246B); Honorius of Autun, *Speculum Ecclesiae:* de paschali die (*PL* 172, 936A); Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, I, 49 (*PL* 177, 48C); Reinerus, *De ineptis cuiusdam Idiotae libellus*, (*MGH*, Scr. XX, 597).

[8] *Cf.* H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue*, I, Paris, 1952, 177-178, also Münzer, *Manilius, 4*, in *RE*, 14, 1, 1928, 1115.

praised by Pliny as a self-taught man and called by him the first Roman to have dealt with the phoenix.[1] Manilius' work has been lost, but it was the source of much of what Pliny had to say about the phoenix. According to Pliny, Manilius stated that the bird lived for 540 years, and this was accepted as a definite fact by Solinus.[2] Some of the Pliny manuscripts mention an age of 560 years, but this can hardly have been the original reading.[3]

According to the Byzantine chronographer Syncellus, a lost work of the historian Dexippus (third century A.D.) said that the phoenix had appeared in Egypt during the rule of the Emperor Claudius, after a period of 654 —or 650— years.[4] The same period (654 years) is found in Suidas, who must have taken it from Syncellus.[5] The calculations underlying these figures cannot be determined, and it remains possible that errors crept into the tradition.

Besides the current figure of 500 years, a 1,000-year period was mentioned more than incidentally. In the Greek literature it is first encountered in Nonnus, but in the Latin literature as early as Martial and Pliny.[6] Derived from Classical sources, this age was

[1] Pliny, X, 4: *Primus atque diligentissime togatorum de eo prodidit Manilius, senator ille maximis nobilis doctrinis doctore nullo.*

[2] Pliny, X, 4: *vivere annis DXL;* Solinus, 33, 12: *probatum est quadraginta et quingentis eum durare annis;* dependent on this is Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 767-768: *vivit quingentis, ut recte creditur, annis / atque quaterdenis.*

[3] *Cf.* the critical apparatus in the edition by Ian-Mayhoff, II, 219. The oldest editions of Pliny read 660 years. The medieval scholiast on Persius, I, 46, seems to assume a 600-year lifespan for the phoenix: *sexcentesimo anno colorem habere venetum.*

[4] Dexippus, *frg.* 11, in Syncellus, *Chronographia*, 334c (= Jacoby, *FGrH*, IIA, Leiden, 1961, 463): ἐν τούτοις τοῖς χρόνοις ἐφάνη τὸ ὄρνεον ὁ φοῖνιξ, καθὼς ἱστοροῦσιν Αἰγύπτιοι, πρὸ † χν′ δὲ ἔτων (sic Jacoby; Dindorff, ed. Bonn, 1829, p. 632: πρὸ χνδ′ ἔτων) φανείς, ὡς καὶ Δέξιππος συμφωνεῖ.

[5] Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. φοῖνιξ: ἐπὶ κλαυδίου καίσαρος ἐλθεῖν φασι τοῦτο τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις διὰ τεττάρων καὶ ν′ καὶ χ′ ἔτων.

[6] Martial, *Epigr.*, V, 7, 2; Pliny, XXIX, 29; Lactantius, *De ave phoenice*, 59; Claudian, *Phoenix*, 27; Ausonius, *Epist.* XX, 9; Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, 12; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XL, 395; John of Gaza, *Descr. tab. mundi*, II, 209; *Appendix Physiologi*, 25. It is conceivable that Lactantius chose the 1000-year period on the basis of his chiliastic convictions, but his use of this period may not be taken as valid evidence for his authorship of *De ave phoenice*, as was done (see p. 7, n. 4) by Riese, 446; Dechent, 49; Fitzpatrick, 33 and 72; Schuster, *Zur Echtheitsfrage*, 126-128; and Rapi-

also given to the phoenix or closely related birds in the Jewish, Coptic, Persian, and Turkish literature.[1]

Immediately after his above-mentioned statement that the 500-year period was the most widely accepted age reached by the phoenix, Tacitus says that there are people who claim that 1,461 years elapse between its birth and death.[2] Although Tacitus does not say so, this figure of 1,461 years must be related to the Egyptian Sothic period, a cycle which, as has already been demonstrated, played an important part in scholary investigations from the eighteenth century on.[3] It is certainly a fact that in Hellenistic and Roman times the phoenix was viewed in Egypt as a symbol of the Sothic period, and that at that time the Classical phoenix was identified with the Egyptian *benu*.[4]

In the second and sixth years of his reign, i.e. in A.D. 138/139 and 142/143, Antoninus Pius had coins struck in Egypt showing the phoenix and carrying the legend Αἰών.[5] According to Censorinus, a new Sothic period began in A.D. 139,[6] and it has correctly been assumed that these coins were related to that event.[7] To this we may add the fact that the date of the second issue was evidently chosen because in that year Sirius rose for the last time in the entire cycle on the first day of the year.[8] This relationship between the

sarda, 43-44; *cf.* also Walla, 161-162, who also thinks that Lactantius here referred to Chiliasm.

[1] Jewish: *Bereshit Rabbah* XIX, 5; Coptic: *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, 170, 1 and 11-12; Persian: Farid ud-Din Attar, *Mantiq Uttair*, 26 (trans. C. S. Nott, *The conference of the birds*, London, 1961, 67); Turkish: W. Ousely, *The oriental collections*, II, London, 1798, 64.

[2] For this, see above, p. 67, n. 3.

[3] See p. 26-32.

[4] For this, see also p. 105-109, and 238-246.

[5] See pl. VI, 8, 9.

[6] Censorinus, *De die natali*, 21, 10; ...*cum abhinc annos centum imperatore Antonino Pio II Bruttio Praesente Romae consulibus idem dies fuerit ante diem XIII Kal. Aug., quo tempore solet canicula in Aegypto facere exortum*. For the various opinions on the correct date of this commencement, see W. Sontheimer, *Zeitrechnung*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 9, 2, 1967, 2392: most scholars take the 20th of July, A.D. 139.

[7] This view is found in e.g. Ideler, (see p. 28, n. 1), 185ff., Ginzel, I. 187, Kubitschek, 97, and Vogt, 115.

[8] This has been pointed out by K. Sethe, *Sethos I und die Erneuerung der Hundssternperiode*, in *ZÄS*, 66, 1931, 3, n. 4.

phoenix and the Sothic period was also assumed by Aristides in an oration in which he compared the rarity of the true rhetor with that of the phoenix.[1] The same comparison occurs in Synesius, who remarks that those who achieve contemplation by their own efforts are rarer than the phoenix by which the Egyptians measure eras.[2]

Through the relationship of the phoenix with the sun and Sothis and thus also with the beginning of the year, it could in the derivative sense also become a symbol of the solar year, which was considered to start with the rising of the waters of the Nile. In connection with Aristides' comparison, a scholiast commented that in Egypt the phoenix was reborn annually,[3] thus robbing Aristides' figure of speech of its point, unless he meant "year" as a long cycle of years. More probably, however, he was referring to a concept current in Egypt, since other sources also indicate that in Roman times the phoenix was related by the Egyptians to the beginning of the year. Achilles Tatius describes an important festival celebrating the flooding of the Nile, an event heralded a few days earlier by the appearance of the phoenix.[4] Lastly, Horapollo states that the Egyptians indicated the rising of the waters by the figure of a phoenix "because the phoenix is a symbol of the sun".[5] This explanation provides further confirmation of the relationship between the phoenix and the beginning of the solar year marked by the rising of the waters of the Nile. When the same author reports that the Egyptians also use the figure of a phoenix when they wish to indicate the total renewal of all things after a long period, he is probably referring to

[1] Aristides, *Orat.*, XLV, 107: εἷς δὲ ἀγαπητῶς καὶ δεύτερος ὥσπερ ὁ 'Ινδικὸς ὄρνις ἐν Αἰγυπτίοις ἡλίου περιόδοις φύεται.

[2] Synesius, *Dio*, 9, 3: σπανιώτερον δὲ δήπου τὸ γένος τῶν τοιούτων ψυχῶν ἢ τὸ τοῦ φοίνικος, ᾧ τὰς περιόδους μετροῦσιν Αἰγύπτιοι. A similar comparison in Themistius, *Orat.*, XXXIII (367c): καὶ ὅτι τούτῳ ἐντυχεῖν σπανιώτερον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἢ τῷ φοίνικι τῷ ὀρνέῳ, ὃ λέγει 'Ηρόδοτος ὁ μυθογράφος δ'ἐτῶν πεντακοσίων φαίνεσθαι Αἰγυπτίοις περὶ τὸν νεὼν ... (deest).

[3] Scholiast on Aristides, XLV, 107: φασὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν εἰς πυρὰν κατιόντα καίεσθαι. For the *benu* and the New Year, see p. 23.

[4] Achilles Tatius, III, 24-25; *cf.* R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium*, München-Berlin, 1962, 129-132 and *idem*, *Isisfeste in griechisch-römischer Zeit*, (Beitr. z. klass. Philol., 5), Meisenheim am Glan, 16-17, 31.

[5] Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, I, 34: πλήμμυραν δέ, ἐπειδὴ ἡλιόυ ἐστὶν ὁ φοῖνιξ σύμβολον.

the renewal of the Sothic period or, more generally, to the conception of the Great Year.[1]

The identification of the age of the phoenix with the duration of the Sothic period seems to have been a typically Egyptian conception that also became known outside Egypt. That this conception was not the only one current in Egypt is evident from the report by Tzetzes that Chaeremon, who lived in the first century A.D., gave the age of the phoenix as 7,006 years in his *Hieroglyphica*.[2]

The highest age mentioned for the phoenix is found in the oldest Classical work in which reference is made to it. This text—Hesiod, *frg.* 304—will be discussed in detail below. It will suffice to note here that in this fragment the age of the phoenix is put at 972 human generations.[3]

This review indicates that in Classical times the phoenix was assigned ages of 1, 500, 540, 654 (650), 1,000, 1,461, and 7,006 years and of 972 human generations: *de numero annorum varia traduntur*. Of all these figures, only 1,461 corresponded to an actual astronomical interval, the Sothic period. This cycle was generally understood as the Egyptian Great Year.[4] It is not surprising that this period has received the most attention in the studies on the phoenix, especially since several Classical authors explicitly state that the lifespan of the phoenix coincides with the duration of the Great Year. But closer analysis shows that these authors had a different conception of the Great Year than the one underlying the Sothic period. To clarify this point, we must first determine what was actually understood under the concept of the Great Year in Classical times.

In the Greek world the first distinct mention of the Great Year was made by Plato, who argued in his *Timaeus* that time is produced by the celestial bodies: the moon determines the month, the sun the year; but the times of the planets and of the sphere of the fixed stars

[1] Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, II, 57: ἀποκατάστασιν δὲ πολυχρόνιον βουλόμενοι σημῆναι, φοίνικα τὸ ὄρνεον ζωγραφοῦσιν· ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ὅτε γεννᾶται, ἀποκατάστασιν γίνεται πραγμάτων.

[2] Chaeremon, *Hierogl.*, *frg.* 3 in Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 395-398 (Jacoby, *FGrH*, III, C, 1, Leiden, 1958, 147): Ὡς δ'ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ἱερογραμματεὺς Χαιρήμων / ἔδειξεν ἐν διδάγμασι τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων, / ὁ φοῖνιξ ἓξ τοῖς ἔτεσι καὶ ἑπτακισχιλίοις / θνήσκει, παραγενόμενος ἐν τόποις τοῖς Αἰγύπτου.

[3] See p. 80, n. 2 for text.

[4] *Cf.* Censorinus, *De die natali*, 18, 10 and 21, 11.

are so great that it can hardly be known whether they are times at all.[1] In any case, it is clear that the perfect number of time fulfils the perfect year at the moment at which the sun, the moon, the planets, and the fixed stars have all completed their courses and have again reached their starting-point.[2] By this is meant that the Great Year is completed when the celestial bodies have reached the same positions in relation to each other as they had at the beginning of that period. The identical conception is found in Cicero, qualified by the statement that the actual duration of such a period is a matter of controversy.[3] But in his *Hortensius*, the book which was later to make such a strong impression on the young Augustine, Cicero equated the Great Year with 12,954 ordinary years, as we know from Tacitus and Servius.[4]

In addition to these opinions about the Great Year there is another according to which the sun, the moon, and the five planets all return at the end of the Great Year to one and the same sign of the Zodiac, the one under which they were when it began. According to Censorius, Aristotle himself had put forward this same view, and preferentially indicated this period as "the Greatest Year". This year, like the ordinary solar year, was thought to have a summer

[1] Plato, *Timaeus*, 39c.

[2] Plato, *Timaeus*, 39d: ἔστιν δ'ὅμως οὐδὲν ἧττον κατανοῆσαι δυνατὸν ὡς ὅ γε τέλεος ἀριθμὸς χρόνου τὸν τέλεον ἐνιαυτὸν πληροῖ τότε, ὅταν ἁπασῶν τῶν ὀκτὼ τὰ πρὸς ἄλληλα συμπερανθέντα τάχη σχῇ κεφαλὴν τῷ τοῦ ταὐτοῦ καὶ ὁμοίως ἰόντος ἀναμετρηθέντα κύκλῳ.

[3] Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 51-52: *magnum annum mathematici nominaverunt, qui tum efficitur cum solis et lunae et quinque errantium ad eandem inter se comparationem confectis omnium spatiis est facta conversio; quae quam longa sit magna quaestio est, esse vero certam et definitam necesse est.*

[4] Tacitus, *Dialogus de oratoribus*, 16, 7: *Nam si, ut Cicero in Hortensio scribit, is est magnus et verus annus, quo eadem positio caeli siderumque, quae cum maxime est, rursum existet, isque annus horum quos nos vocamus annorum duodecim milia nongentos quinquaginta quattuor complectitur...;* Servius, *Comm. in Verg. Aen.*, I, 296. The same number is given by Solinus in connection with the phoenix; see p. 75, n. 3. H. Usener, *Vergessenes*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 28, 1873, 392-403 (= *idem*, *Kleine Schriften*, III, Leipzig-Berlin, 1914, 11-21) assumed that here Cicero depended on Aristotle. Servius, *Comm. in Verg. Aen.*, III, 289, says that in his *De natura deorum*, Cicero took the Great Year at 3,000 ordinary years; perhaps in the lacuna in III, 65, *cf.* A. St. Pease, *M. Tulli Ciceronis De natura deorum*, II, Cambridge, (Mass.), 1958, 670, in which many Classical views on the duration of the Great Year are given.

and winter too, the summer culminating in a world conflagration and the winter in a world flood.[1] How much of this really goes back to Aristotle cannot be said with certainty.[2] According to Seneca, Berossus, the Babylonian priest of Bel who wrote in the third century B.C., propagated the same doctrine in a more detailed form: when the sun, the moon, and the planets came to lie in a straight line under the sign of Cancer, the world would burst into flames; and if they reached that position under Capricorn, the world would be inundated.[3] These rather improbable theories were especially favoured among astrologers, since Greek astronomy had already reached a point of development at which the doctrines of Berossus could not be accepted.[4]

These texts treating the views of Aristotle and Berossus say that world catastrophes corresponding to the summer and winter of the solar year can occur in the course of the Great Year. The period between two world catastrophes could also be seen as a Great Year,

[1] Censorinus, *De die natali*, 18, 11: *Est praeterea annus quem Aristoteles maximum potius quam magnum appellat, quem solis et lunae vagarumque quinque stellarum orbes conficiunt, cum ad idem signum, ubi quondam simul fuerent, una referuntur; cuius anni hiemps summa est cataclysmos, quam nostri diluvionem vocant, aestas autem ecpyrosis, quod est mundi encendium. Nam his alternis temporibus tum exignescere tum exaquescere videtur.*

[2] V. Rose, *Aristotelis fragmenta*, Lipsiae, 1886, 39, *frg.* 25, borrows Censorinus' text up to "*una referuntur*" and also gives Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 51, which, however, has a divergent content. Here, Rose followed Usener, see p. 73, n. 4.

[3] Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.*, III, 29, 1: *arsura enim terrena contendit* (sc. Berossus), *quandoque omnia sidera, quae nunc diversos agunt cursus, in Cancrum convenerint, sic sub eodem posita vestigio, ut recta linea exire per orbes omnium possit; inundationem futuram, cum eadem siderum turba in Capricornum convenerit. Illic solstitium, hic bruma conficitur; magnae potentiae signa, quando in ipsa mutatione anni momenta sunt.* This text is given as *frg.* 37 in the edition by P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1923, 266-267 and as *frg.* 21 in Jacoby, *FGrH*, III, C, 1, Leiden, 1958, 397, who places it with a question mark under (Pseudo)-Berossus, *Chaldaica*.

[4] See for this point J. Bidez, *Bérose et la grande année*, in *Melanges Paul Fredericq*, Brussels, 1904, 9-19; *cf.* also F. Boll, C. Bezold and W. Gundel, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, 5th revised ed. by H. G. Gundel, Darmstadt, 1966, 201. For the correspondence between Aristotle and Berossus, see K. F. Smith, *Ages of the world, Greek and Roman*, in *ERE*, I, 1908, 199. There has also been some doubt as to whether Seneca rendered Berossus accurately; see W. and H. Gundel, *Planeten*, in *RE*, 20, 2, 1950, 2149.

but only in the derivative sense. The true Great Year, which might with Aristotle be called the Greatest Year, coincided with a complete cosmic revolution, whether interpreted in the sense of Plato and Cicero or in that of Aristotle and Berossus.

The Great Year of the Classical world arose from the purely mythical conception of a cosmic periodicity ultimately traceable to Babylonia.[1] Originally, it had nothing to do with astronomy and probably as little to do with astrology. It was with the duration of this Great Year that the age of the phoenix was identified in Classical times. This is clearly expressed in Pliny's reproduction of Manilius' ideas about the phoenix: the life of the phoenix coincided with the Great Year, in which the same indications of periods and stellar constellations recur.[2] Solinus adopted this idea literally, but he seems to have found the span of 540 years accepted by Manilius for the phoenix and therefore also for the Great Year, rather short. After saying that it has been proven that the bird lives for 540 years, he remarks a little further on that the authors are convinced that the life of the phoenix coincides with the Great Year, "although most of them say that this lasts not 540 but 12,954 years".[3] In this Solinus must have had in mind such authors as Cicero and Tacitus, who put the duration of the Great Year at 12,954 ordinary years.[4]

As the science of astronomy progressed, certain cycles based on reliable calculations were indicated as Great Years. The eight-year cycle known in Athens before Meto and the nineteen-year period

[1] *Cf.* B. L. van der Waerden, *Das grosse Jahr und die ewige Wiederkehr*, in *Hermes*, 80. 1952, 135-143; W. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft. Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos und Plato*, (Erlanger Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kunstwissenschaft, X), Nürnberg, 1962, 293-296. For the origin, development, and influence of the idea of the Great Year, see also Boll *et al.*, *o.c.*, 200-205. K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*, Frankfurt am Main, 2nd ed., 1959, 184, calls this view rather rationalistic "*eine wilde astrologische Phantasterei, aller Berechnung spottend, nicht einmal griechischen Ursprungs, sondern ausgehecht im fernen Babylon und ausgegeben für eine Uroffenbarung Bels*".

[2] Pliny, X, 5: *Cum huius alitis vita magni conversionem anni fieri prodit idem Manilius iterumque significationes tempestatum et siderum easdem reverti.*

[3] Solinus, 33, 13: *cum huius vita magni anni fieri conversionem rata fides est inter auctores: licet plurimi eorum magnum annum non quingentis quadraginta, sed duodecim milibus nungentis quinquaginta quattuor annis constare dicant.*

[4] See p. 73, n. 4.

introduced by this astronomer in 432 B.C. are examples of this.[1] These cycles were intended to provide a correlation between the lunar month and the solar year.[2] Another astronomically based cycle was the Sothic period, in which the correlation between the ordinary civil year and the solar year was expressed.[3] It is clear that these cycles can only be called a Great Year in the derivative sense, because they have nothing to do with the old concept of a total cosmic revolution. On these grounds it seems improbable that the Classical conception of the phoenix as a symbol of the Great Year developed from the idea, current in later times in Egypt, that the life of the phoenix coincided with the Sothic period. We have already discussed the history of this stubborn misconception.[4] In the following it will be demonstrated that even in the oldest text in which the phoenix is mentioned—Hesiod, *frg.* 304—the bird is the symbol of a specific non-astronomical period and that it was on this basis that it was related to the Sothic period in Graeco-Roman Egypt.

2. Hesiod, *Frg.* 304

In the Classical world several verses attributed to Hesiod were transmitted concerning the lifespan of the crow, the deer, the raven, the phoenix, and the Nymphs. In their Greek form these verses are preserved most completely in Plutarch's *De defectu oraculorum.*[5] On

[1] Aëtius, *De plac. Philos.*, II, 32, 2: Τὸν δὲ μέγαν ἐνιαυτὸν οἱ μὲν ἐν τῇ ὀκταετηρίδι τιθένται, οἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ ἐννέα καὶ δεκαετηρίδι.

[2] For both periods, see W. Kubitschek, *Meto*, 2, in *RE*, 15, 1932, 1360-1363 and W. Sontheimer, *Zeitrechnung*, (see p. 70, n. 6), 2456-2457. Remarkably enough, it was later assumed that in Meto's 19 years long "Great Year", too, a complete cosmic revolution took place; see Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca*, XII, 36, 2: ἐν δὲ τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἔτεσι τὰ ἄστρα τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν ποιεῖται καὶ καθάπερ ἐνιαυτοῦ τινος μεγάλου τὸν ἀνακυκλισμὸν λαμβάνει.

[3] For this, see p. 26-27.

[4] See p. 26-32.

[5] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum*, 11 (415c). Cited throughout from R. Flacelière, *Plutarque, Sur la disparition des oracles,* (Annales de l'Université de Lyon, 3ème série, Lettres, fasc. 14), Paris, 1947. The fragment from Hesiod is given as *frg.* 171 by A. Rzach, *Hesiodi carmina*, Lipsiae, 1902, 382-383 and as *frg.* 304 by R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, *Fragmenta*

rather unconvincing grounds, modern scholars have considered this fragment to be part of Pseudo-Hesiod's *Praecepta Chironis*.[1] It will be shown below, however, that more arguments can be advanced for the authorship of Hesiod than against it. In the following it is therefore considered that the author of these verses is the writer of the *Erga* and *Theogonia*, although it remains possible that the text contains a few later "corrections".

In recent decades it has become increasingly clear that in the last-mentioned work Hesiod transmitted various old Eastern mythological ideas to the Greek world.[2] This also holds for the fragment concerning the ages reached by the animals and the Nymphs, which requires thorough discussion here because of its great importance for the elucidation of the early symbolism of the phoenix.

The discussions evoked by the quotation from Hesiod in Plutarch's dialogue show that an explanation for it was actively sought even in Classical times. The great difficulty was and still is that the life-span of the animals and the Nymphs was expressed not in years but in generations. This is further complicated by a variant reading explicitly mentioned by Plutarch: one reading gives "generations of young people" and the other "generations of old people". Because it is also mentioned that Heraclitus put a generation at 30 years, the context of Hesiod's passage in Plutarch has received considerable attention from modern scholars, but an explanation of the fragment has not yet been given.[3]

Because so many different problems must be discussed in relation to this text, it will promote clarity to start with a recapitu-

Hesiodea, Oxonii, 1967, 158-159. A detailed study on the fragment, with no attempt to elucidate the contents, is found in J. Schwarz, *Pseudo-Hesiodeia. Recherches sur la composition, la diffusion et la disparation ancienne d'oeuvres attribuées à Hésiode*, Leiden, 1960, 228-244.

[1] E.g. Rzach and Schwarz; Merkelbach and West include it among the "*Fragmenta incertae sedis*".

[2] *Cf.* references on p. 111, n. 1.

[3] K. Reinhardt, *Heraclitea*, in *Hermes*, 77, 1942, 234 calls the verses "*eine Priamel, die zugleich ein Rechenexempel und ein Rätsel ist*"; see also references on p. 90, n. 1. The only attempts to analyse the riddle as a whole are found in W. H. Roscher, *Enneadische Studien*, in *Abh. königl. sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, Philol.-Hist. Klasse, XXVI, 1, Leipzig, 1907, 24-27, 41-44 and W. Schulz, *Rätsel aus dem hellenischen Kulturkreise*, I, Leipzig, 1909, 143, II, Leipzig, 1912, 27.

lation of the discussion in Plutarch and then give the proposed solution to what might be called the riddle of Hesiod. In this way the various opinions in Plutarch will automatically be explained.

Plutarch wrote *De defectu oraculorum* around A.D. 100. In this work he took up a subject that must have been very close to him as a priest of the Pythian Apollo in Delphi.[1] The formulation of this dialogue is unusual in that Plutarch neither takes part in it nor reports it; both are done by his brother Lamprias.

The main speakers are two holy men who meet by chance at the temple of Delphi: the grammarian Demetrius, who was travelling from Britain to his native city of Tarsus, and Cleombrotus of Lacedaemonia, who had spent considerable time in Egypt.[2] Lamprias and his two guests, accompanied by Ammonius the Philosopher, make their way to the hall of the Cnidians, where they are expected.[3] On the way, Cleombrotus tells them something about the temple of Ammon in Egypt, which he had recently visited. When Lamprias questions him about the famous oracle there, Demetrius brings up the real subject of this dialogue. He points out that it is not only in Egypt but also in Greece that the oracles have lost their former glory and have indeed almost entirely disappeared. He suggests that it would be useful to inquire into the reason for this general decay, and for the sake of emphasis enumerates a long list of oracles once renowned and now silent.[4]

After they arrive at their destination, the conversation is resumed and those present join in. Various possible causes for the silence of the oracles are discussed and discarded. Didymus the Cynic is of the opinion that the gods have withdrawn from the world and taken the oracles with them because of the sinful misconduct of man; Ammonius ascribes it to the sharp decrease in the population: the oracles have been abolished by the gods because there was no longer anyone to consult them.[5] Lamprias says in answer to a question

[1] For further details on *De defectu oraculorum* and the problems it offers, see the *Introduction* to the edition by Flacelière and also K. Ziegler, *Plutarchos*, 2, in *RE*, 21, 1, 1951, 712 (dating) and 832-838.

[2] *De def. orac.*, 1-2 (409e-410b).

[3] *Ibid.*, 6 (412d).

[4] *Ibid.*, 5 (411d-412d).

[5] *Ibid.*, 7-8 (412f-414c).

from Cleombrotus that he cannot agree with Ammonius. In his opinion the deity cannot be held responsible for the decline of the oracles, which lies in the very nature of the matter, since although the gods are immortal their gifts to man are not.[1]

Plutarch then goes on to explain his own opinion, which he puts in the mouth of the widely travelled Cleombrotus. The latter agrees with Lamprias, but introduces an entirely new element into the discussion by pointing to the demons, beings between gods and men, forming the link between them. The argumentation of Cleombrotus and the resulting discussion make Chapters 10 to 21 of *De defectu oraculorum* an important document for the understanding of the Classical ideas concerning demons.[2] The discussion also dealt with *frg.* 304 from Hesiod at length, because the Nymphs mentioned there are included among the demons.

Cleombrotus begins by stating that it is not entirely clear whether the doctrine of the demons originally derived from the Magi, the disciples of Zoroaster, from Orpheus, from the Egyptians, or from the Phrygians. He himself thinks that it must have originated among the last two, because burial and mourning rites play such a large part in their religions. This comment is clarified a little further on, when it is explained that the demons are none other than the souls of the dead.[3]

Cleombrotus then points out that in Homer the concept demon is not yet precisely defined, because he sometimes used the word to indicate gods. Hesiod was the first to make a clear distinction between the four classes of rational beings: gods, demons, heroes, and men. He also postulated, apparently, their transmutation indicating that the people of the Golden Age were transformed into many good demons and assigning the demigods to the heroes.[4] Others, still

[1] *Ibid.*, 9 (414c-e).

[2] For Plutarch's demonology, see Flacelière, 53-63 and Ziegler, 838; for the doctrines of demonology in general, see M. Detienne, *La notion de DAÏMÔN dans le Pythagorisme ancien*, (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, fasc. CLXV), Paris, 1963.

[3] *De def. orac.*, 10 (414e-415a); *cf.* also 38 (431b): ὑπολαβὼν δ' Ἀμμώνιος, οἴει γὰρ ἕτερόν τι τοὺς δαίμονας, εἶπεν, ἢ ψυχὰς ὄντας περιπολεῖν καθ' Ἡσίοδον "ἠέρα ἑσσαμένους"; *cf.* Hesiod, *Erga*, 125, 255.

[4] *Ibid.*, 10 (415a-b). For this distinction, see Detienne, 32-42 and the text on his p. 172-173 ("*Pythagoricorum fragmenta de daemonibus*", nrs. 7-16).

according to Cleombrotus, postulate a transmutation for bodies and souls alike: just as a natural upward movement produces water from earth, air from water, and fire from air, so the better souls are transmutated from men into heroes and from them into demons. Over a long period, a few souls of the demons are so purified by virtue that they share completely in the divine nature. But it happens to some souls that they loose mastery over themselves, are degraded, and are again clothed with mortal bodies, after which they lead a dim life, like vapour.[1]

According to Cleombrotus, Hesiod also held that after the passage of certain periods of time demons too die, for he has one of the Naiads say, with an enigmatic reference to her age; "The cawing crow lives for nine generations of young [or "old"; see below] men, but the deer four times longer than the crow; the raven reaches the age of three deer, but the phoenix of nine ravens; we, however, the fair-haired Nymphs, daughters of Aegis-bearing Zeus, reach the age of ten phoenixes."[2] Those who misinterpret the word generation reach a huge number for this period, but they are in error because here generation must be understood as year.[3] Thus, the Nymphs live $9 \times 4 \times 3 \times 9 \times 10 = 9{,}720$ years. This is less, says Cleombrotus, than most mathematicians, i.e. astronomers, think, but more than Pindar indicated when he said that the Nymphs "received from fate the same lifespan as a tree", which is why they also call themselves Hamadryads.[4] From the reference to the mathematicians

[1] *Ibid.*, 10 (415b-c).

[2] *Ibid.* 11, (415c): ὁ δ' Ἡσίοδος οἴεται καὶ περιόδοις τισὶ χρόνων γίγνεσθαι τοῖς δαίμοσι τὰς τελευτάς· λέγει γὰρ ἐν τῷ τῆς Ναΐδος προσώπῳ καὶ τὸν χρόνον αἰνιττόμενος (*frg.* 304)· "'Εννέα τοι ζώει γενεὰς λακέρυξα κορώνη, / ἀνδρῶν ἡβώντων (Rzach: γηράντων)· ἔλαφος (Flacelière erroneously: ἔλαψος) δέ τε τετρακόρωνος· / τρεῖς δ'ἐλάφους ὁ κόραξ γηράσκεται· αὐτὰρ ὁ φοῖνιξ / ἐννέα τοὺς κόρακας· δέκα δ'ἡμεῖς τοὺς φοίνικας (Rzach: δέκα φοίνικας δέ τοι· ἡμεῖς) / Νύμφαι εὐπλόκαμοι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο". For other minor variants and complete or partial citations of this fragment, see the editions of Rzach, and Merkelbach and West; also Schwarz, *Pseudo-Hesiodeia*, 237, n. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, 11 (415d): Ἔστι γὰρ ἐνιαυτός.

[4] *Ibid.*, 11 (415d): ἔλαττον μὲν οὗ νομίζουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν μαθηματικῶν, πλέον δ'οὗ Πίνδαρος εἴρηκεν εἰπὼν τὰς Νύμφας ζῆν "ἰσοδένδρου τέκμαρ αἰῶνος λαχούσας" (*frg.* 165, Schroeder = 184, Turyn) διὸ καὶ καλεῖν αὐτὰς ἁμαδρυάδας. For the mortality of the Nymphs, *cf.* H. Hester, *Nymphai*, in *RE*, 17, 1937, 1530; W. Süss, *Hamadryaden*, in *RE*, 7, 1912, 2288; L. Bloch, *Nymphen*,

we can infer that among them the verses of Hesiod were understood as an indication of a given cosmic period, probably the Great Year.

Demetrius cannot accept Cleombrotus' view and interrupts him to ask how he can say this when such an age is not reached by either a young or—as some read—an old man. Then he recapitulates the interpretations given to both readings: those who read "young" follow Heraclitus in putting a generation at 30 years, understanding this as the time elapsed between the moment at which a father generates a son and that at which the son in his turn does the same thing.[1] Those who read "old" put the generation at 108 years, because 54 is the highest age at which a man can be at the middle of his life.[2] Demetrius also tells how the number 54 was arrived at: it is the sum of the so-called great or double tetractys ($1 + 2 + 3 + 2^2 + 3^2 + 2^3 + 3^3$), which was also used by Plato in the composition of the world soul in the *Timaeus*.[3] He added that the whole passage was apparently a riddle posed by Hesiod with respect to the *ecpyrosis*, which probably means that the Nymphs will cease to exist together with all liquids.[4]

It is of importance to point out even here, in anticipation of the discussion of this point, that the 30 and 108 years in Hesiod mentioned by Demetrius clearly concern two different interpretations, the first being what we mean by a generation, the second a rather artificial maximum human age.

in Roscher, *Lexikon*, III, 1, 1897-1902, 423; and H. W. Stoll, *Hamadryaden*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, I, 2, 1886-1890, 1825-1826. Here, they are included among the demons, whose mortality is also emphasized several times in the following chapters of the dialogue; see also Detienne, *La notion de DAÏMÔN*, 150-154.

[1] *Ibid.*, 11 (415e): Ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν "ἡβώντων" ἀναγιγνώσκοντες ἔτη τριάκοντα ποιοῦσι τὴν γενεὰν καθ' Ἡράκλειτον (*frg.* A 19, *FVS*, I, 149) ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ γεννῶντα παρέχει τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένον ὁ γεννήσας. For the Heraclitean generation and the Great Year, see below p. 90, n. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 11 (415e): οἱ δὲ "γηρώντων" πάλιν, οὐχ "ἡβώντων" γράφοντες ὀκτὼ καὶ ἑκατὸν ἔτη νέμουσι τῇ γενεᾷ· τὰ γὰρ πεντήκοντα καὶ τέσσαρα μεσούσης ὅρον ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς εἶναι.

[3] Plato, *Timaeus*, 35b-36b; see also p. 141.

[4] *De Def. orac.*, 11 (415e-f): καὶ ὁ λόγος ὅλος ᾐνίχθαι δοκεῖ τῷ Ἡσιόδῳ πρὸς τὴν ἐκπύρωσιν, ὁπηνίκα συνεκλείπειν τοῖς ὑγροῖς εἰκός ἐστι τὰς Νύμφας (follows quotation of *Ilias*, XX, 8-9).

The ideas stated by Demetrius were evidently rather widely known, since Cleombrotus answers that he has often heard these arguments. He scathingly remarks that he sees that the world conflagration of the Stoics seizes Hesiod's words and sets them afire as easily as those of Heraclitus and Orpheus.[1] It seems safe to infer from the fact that Cleombrotus mentions Orpheus after Heraclitus that the idea of a generation as 108 (2 × 54) years reported by Demetrius was considered to have derived from the Orphics.

Cleombrotus rejects this destruction of the world and maintains that the year, which comprises the beginning and the end "of all that the seasons bring forth and the earth makes grow",[2] is correctly called "generation". He asks explicitly whether the others agree with the view that Hesiod calls a human life a generation, to which his opponent Demetrius gives an affirmative answer.[3] From his choice of words it is clear that by "generation" Cleombrotus meant the duration of human life in general. This makes it the more remarkable that he then nevertheless attempts to show that the word generation means a year. He points out that the same word is often used to indicate a measure and the thing measured. We call the unit, being the smallest measure and the beginning of every number, a number; and in the same way Hesiod calls the year, which is the principal measure of man's life, a generation, i.e. by the same word as that which is measured.[4]

It hardly seems likely that the others found this reasoning convincing, but no more is said about it. The argumentation would have had point only if Hesiod had used the word year and Cleombrotus had claimed that by it he had actually meant a generation. On the basis of his reasoning Cleombrotus—and therefore Plutarch—could never have arrived at the conclusion that generation must be taken as a year in Hesiod's riddle. One obtains a strong impression that the relationship was actually the reverse, and that he simply accepted

[1] *Ibid.*, 12 (415f-416a): ἀκούω ταῦτ', ἔφη, πολλῶν καὶ ὁρῶ τὴν Στωικὴν ἐκπύρωσιν ὥσπερ τὰ Ἡρακλείτου καὶ τὰ Ὀρφέως ἐπινεμομένην ἔπη οὕτω καὶ τὰ Ἡσιόδου καὶ συνεξάπτουσαν.

[2] Probably cited from Heraclitus, *frg.* B. 100 (*FVS*, I, 173).

[3] *Ibid.*, 12 (416a): καὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ὁμολογεῖτε δήπου τὸν Ἡσίοδον ἀνθρωπίνην ζωὴν τὴν γενεὰν λέγειν. Ἦ γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως; Συνέφησεν ὁ Δημήτριος.

[4] *Ibid.*, 12 (416a-b).

an interpretation from a source he found reliable, but whose original meaning escaped him. This would explain the weakness of the arguments by which he attempted to make it acceptable to himself and others. To support his thesis he finally points to the remarkable character of the number he has calculated, 9,720; this number is found by taking the number 40, which is four times the tetractys ($1 \times 4 + 2 \times 4 + 3 \times 4 + 4 \times 4$ or $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4) \times 4$), and multiplying it by 3 five times.[1]

As if to cut short any further discussion of Hesiod's verses, Cleombrotus says that it really makes little difference exactly how long the demons live. The only important thing is that it can be demonstrated on the basis of old and unequivocal testimonies that demons truly exist as beings between the gods and men and that they are subject to the passions of men and the vicissitudes of fate. All religious acts, including the most extreme, concern the demons; all the joys and all the catastrophes that can happen to mankind must be ascribed to them. Everything told in myths and hymns about the gods has in reality to do with the activities of the good or the evil demons. For it is inconceivable that gods would be punished by being driven out of the divine family, as is told of Apollo, for instance, who after the killing of the Python in Delphi was banished to Tempe for nine years to purify himself.[2] The only possible conclusion is that the genesis, functioning, and decline of the oracles are all to be ascribed to the demons: if they die, the oracles disappear with them; if they are banished or depart, the oracles are silenced and only speak again when the demons return.[3]

But Heracleon of Megara cannot resign himself to this conclusion: he is willing to accept that the demons are responsible for the oracles, but that they are capable of crimes, can be banished, and can even ultimately die, seems to him to go too far.[4] Philip the Historian comes to the aid of Cleombrotus, however, and as proof that demons really die he tells the well-known and intriguing story of the death of the great Pan.[5] The mortality of the demons seems to have been

[1] *Ibid.*, 12 (416b).
[2] *Ibid.*, 12-14 (416c-417e).
[3] *Ibid.*, 15 (417e-418d).
[4] *Ibid.*, 16 (418d-419a).
[5] *Ibid.*, 17 (419a-e).

a difficult point, because Plutarch affirms it once again by having Demetrius tell about something that had happened to him in Britain, where there are several islands bearing the names of heroes and demons. On one of these islands, Cronus lived surrounded by many demons. In the vicinity of these islands Demetrius had been overtaken by a heavy storm with violent winds and thunder and lightning. When the storm had subsided he was told that it had occurred because one of the higher beings had come to his end: when the "great souls" are extinguished they cause, like a dying lamp, much nuisance.[1]

After a discussion of the opinions of the Stoics, the Epicureans, and other philosophers about demons,[2] Cleombrotus offers a kind of divine authorization of his own views by citing an inspired man he claims to have met on the shores of the Erythrean Sea. This man showed himself once each year, and spent the rest of the time in the company of roving Nymphs and demons. He was the most handsome man Cleombrotus had ever seen, had never been sick, knew many languages, and when he spoke filled the air around him with a delicious fragrance. What this divine hermit had to say about the demons proves to be a short summarization of the views advanced by Cleombrotus, with the striking variation that the banishment of Apollo did not last nine years and was not spent in Tempe: he had been transported into another world and had remained there for nine Great Years.[3]

We have devoted so much space to the passage on the demons in Plutarch's *De defectu oraculum* because of its relevance with respect to our discussion of the phoenix as a symbol of the soul.

From the discussion of the possible interpretations of Hesiod's riddle in Plutarch, it is evident that in ancient times the word generation used in it was taken as an indication of 1, 30, or 108 years. If we calculate the ages of the animals and of the Nymphs

[1] *Ibid.*, 18 (419e-420a).

[2] *Ibid.*, 19-20 (420a-e).

[3] *Ibid.*, 21 (420e-421e), *cf.* 421c: Τῷ δ' ἀποκτείναντι (sc τὸν πύθωνα) μήτ' ἐννέα ἔτων μήτ' εἰς τὰ Τέμπη γενέσθαι μετὰ τοῦτο τὴν φυγήν, ἀλλ' ἐκπεσόντ' ἐλθεῖν εἰς ἕτερον κόσμον, ὕστερον δ' ἐκεῖθεν ἐνιαυτῶν μεγάλων ἐννέα περιόδοις ἁγνὸν γενόμενον καὶ Φοῖβον ἀληθῶς κατελθόντα τὸ χρηστήριον παραλαβεῖν τέως ὑπὸ Θέμιδος φυλαττόμενον.

with these figures, we arrive at the following:[1]

1 generation =	1 year		30 years		108 years
crow	9	9 × 30 =	270	9 × 108 =	972
deer	36	36 × 30 =	1,080	36 × 108 =	3,888
raven	108	108 × 30 =	3,240	108 × 108 =	11,664
phoenix	972	972 × 30 =	29,160	972 × 108 =	104,976
Nymphs	9,720	9,720 × 30 =	291,600	9,720 × 108 =	1,049,760

This does not bring us much closer to a solution, however, since of all the ages assigned to the phoenix, none corresponds to 972, 29,160, or 104,976 years.[2] Furthermore, if the lifespan of the Nymphs was indeed equated with a cosmic period, as Demetrius argued, there is the further difficulty that none of the many sources for the duration of such a period mentions 9,720, 291,600, or 1,049,760 years.[3] This raises the question of whether the correct calculation is to be found among the three possibilities offered by Plutarch in *De defectu oraculorum*.

In the ancient world, however, there was still another conception concerning the duration of a generation, and it seems certain that this one can lead to the solution of Hesiod's riddle. A scholiast on Homer's *Iliad*, IV, 101, who noted all the meanings that the word "generation" can have, mentions that in Hesiod, *frg*. 304, it means a period of 33 years and that in younger poets this word appears instead of "year".[4] We have seen that in Plutarch, Cleombrotus warmly defended the latter view with respect to Hesiod's riddle, but in this connection the former opinion is more important. It is based on an old genealogical chronology found in Herodotus and other authors, in which three generations represent a period of 100 years.[5] Taken strictly, therefore, the scholiast should have said that

[1] This calculation is also found in Roscher, *Enneadische Studien*, (see p. 77, n. 3), 25.

[2] See p. 72.

[3] For this, see p. 73 and Pease's references mentioned there in n. 4.

[4] E. Maass, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem Townleyana*, I, (= *Scholia Graeca*, ed. Dindorf, V), Oxonii, 1887, 132, 4 (ad *Iliadem*, IV, 101): γενεὰ σημειοῖ ... λγ' ἔτη ἀνθρώπου, "ἐννέα γὰρ ζώει γενεάς" ... καὶ ὁ ἐνιαυτὸς παρὰ τοῖς νεωτέροις.

[5] Herodotus, II, 142: γενεαὶ γὰρ τρεῖς ἀνδρῶν ἑκατὸν ἔτεά ἐστι. The same view is found in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, I, 136, 4; for Herodotus, see

one generation comprises $33\frac{1}{3}$ years, but the use of fractions was not customary in this system.[1] If we then concur with the scholiast in applying this interpretation of the word generation to Hesiod, frg. 304, we reach an age for the crow, for instance, of 300 years.[2]

Ausonius too appears to have known that in Hesiod's riddle three generations could be taken as a unit. In his *Griphus ternarii numeri* he says that Nestor lived for three generations and that the crow lives three times longer. He adds that even if the crow was to live nine times the period of three generations (i.e. for 27 generations), the deer would still surpass it by three times the age of Nestor (thus with a lifespan of 36 generations).[3] He was evidently uncertain about whether the nine human generations of the crow should be taken as three or as nine periods of three generations, which may be related to the problem of the reading as "young" or "old" people. It is in any case highly probable that, like Herodotus, he put the duration of three generations, *in casu* the life of Nestor, at 100 years,[4] and that he must therefore have been aware of the same interpretation of Hesiod's riddle as Homer's commentator.

A lifespan of 300 years is also assumed for the crow in the *Birds* of Aristophanes. When Pisthetaerus attempts to persuade the birds

F. Mitchel, *Herodotus' use of genealogical chronology*, in *Phoenix*, 10, 1956, 48-69 and W. den Boer, *Herodot und die Systeme der Chronologie*, in *Mnemosyne*, Ser. IV, 20, 1967, 36-40, and *idem*, *Laconian Studies*, Amsterdam, 1954, 10, 14.

[1] See den Boer, *Herodot*, 36.

[2] Similarly calculated by O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt*, II, Leipzig, 1913, 105 and Gossen, *Rabe*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, I, 1914, 21. Roscher, *Enneadische Studien*, (see p. 77, n. 3), 25, n. 37 calls this calculation possible, but prefers to assume a 40-year generation in Hesiod because that gives for the crow an attractive total of 360 years (p. 41).

[3] Ausonius, *Opusc.*, XXVI, 2, 11-17: *Ter nova Nestoreos implevit purpura fusos / et totiens trino cornix vivacior aevo: / quam novies terni glomerantem saecula tractus / vincunt aeripedes ter terno Nestore cervi: / tris quorum aetates superat Phoebeius oscen, / quem novies senior Gangeticus anteit ales, / ales cinnameo radiatus tempora nido.* For Ausonius' other version of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, see below p. 140, n. 4.

[4] *Cf.* Hieronymus, *Epist.*, X, 2 (ed. Labourt, I, 28), in which the old Paul of Concordia near Aquilea is described in a flattering letter as a second Nestor: *Ecce iam centenarius aetatem circulus voluitur ... oculi puro lumine vigent, pedes inprimunt certa vestigia, auditus penetrabilis, dentes candidi, vox canora ...*

to found a Utopia in the air and to take over the places of the gods, the chorus asks how this will affect mankind, whose lives are measured by the gods: must they die as small children? The answer is that the birds, quite to the contrary, will give mankind an additional 300 years. To the question of the source of this gift, Pisthetaerus says that it will be the birds themselves: "Dost thou not know that the cawing crow lives for five human generations?" [1] This last is a quotation evidently intended to clarify the just-mentioned 300 years. It also forms the high point of a carefully built up climax obviously meant to make the audience laugh. We shall return to this point; here, it will suffice to observe that Aristophanes too knew the view that the crow has a lifespan of 300 years. The remarkable point is that in this oldest reference to Hesiod, *frg.* 304, mention is made not of nine but of five human generations. Even an early scholiast assumed that Aristophanes was in error here.[2] But there is every reason to assume that he was not in error but rather cited a version that deviated from the text of Hesiod that has come down to us. It is striking that his quotation represents a perfect hexameter and that the question in Plutarch of whether generations of old or young people are meant, cannot arise. The various problems with which Hesiod, *frg.* 304, confronts us can be brought to a satisfactory solution if we conclude from Aristophanes that in addition to Hesiod's version the riddle had another form in which the 300 years of the crow was expressed as five generations of 60 years. This may be termed the sexagesimal version.

Besides these two versions there is a third possibility, one which at first sight may appear rather hypothetical, but which on closer inspection has surprising implications. The discussion of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, in Plutarch has shown that one interpretation of the riddle was based on the 30 years at which Heraclitus had put the duration of a generation. We have seen that this gave us but little help. But

[1] Aristophanes, *Aves*, 606-609: *ΧΟ.* Πῶς δ' εἰς γηράς ποτ' ἀφίξονται; καὶ γὰρ τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἐν 'Ολύμπῳ. / "Η παιδάρι' ὄντ' ἀποθνήσκειν δεῖ; *ΠΙ.* Μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ τριακόσι' αὐτοῖς / ἔτι προσθήσουσ' ὄρνιθες ἔτη. *ΧΟ.* παρὰ τοῦ; *ΠΙ.* Παρὰ τοῦ; παρ' ἑαυτῶν. / Οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι "πέντ' ἀνδρῶν γενεὰς ζώει λακέρυζα κορώνη".

[2] F. Dübner, *Scholia in Aristophanem*, Parisiis, 1842, 224 (ad *Aves*, 609): κακῶς καὶ τοῦτο παρὰ τὸ 'Ησιόδειον παίζει "ἐννέα γὰρ ζώει γενεὰς λακέρυζα κορώνη".

we arrive at a remarkable result if we take the ages of the animals and the Nymphs calculated according to the Hesiodic and sexagesimal versions and express them as Heraclitean generations of 30 years. Applied to the crow, we then obtain $9 \times 33\frac{1}{3} = 5 \times 60 = 10 \times 30 = 300$ years. This is not meant to imply that Heraclitus knew an independent version of *frg.* 304 in which the age of the crow was put at 10 human generations. But we shall attempt to show that he in all likelihood knew the following calculation of Hesiod's riddle and that he expressed the resulting values in his generations of 30 years.

If we repeat our calculation but now for the Hesiodic, the sexagesimal, and the "Heraclitean" version, we obtain the following:

	Hesiod	sexagesimal version	Heraclitus	years
crow	$9 \times 33\frac{1}{3} =$	$5 \times 60 =$	$10 \times 30 =$	300
deer	$36 \times 33\frac{1}{3} =$	$20 \times 60 =$	$40 \times 30 =$	1,200
raven	$108 \times 33\frac{1}{3} =$	$60 \times 60 =$	$120 \times 30 =$	3,600
phoenix	$972 \times 33\frac{1}{3} =$	$540 \times 60 =$	$1{,}080 \times 30 =$	32,400
Nymphs	$9{,}720 \times 33\frac{1}{3} =$	$5{,}400 \times 60 =$	$10{,}800 \times 30 =$	324,000

In the discussion of the passage Plutarch devoted to Hesiod, *frg.* 304, in his *De defectu oraculorum*, we joined Demetrius in his surprise that Cleombrotus thought that the word generation as used in Hesiod's verses actually meant a year.[1] We found the same interpretation, without reference to Hesiod, in Homer's commentator.[2] Cleombrotus expressed the opinion that Nymphs live for 9,720 years and the phoenix for 972. If we apply the same reasoning to the sexagesimal version we obtain for the Nymphs 5,400 and for the phoenix 540 years. But this last is a value we have already encountered: the Roman senator Manilius said that the phoenix lived for 540 years, which was adopted by Pliny who was followed by Solinus.[3]

It might be argued that the suggested connection between the sexagesimal version and the lifespan given by Manilius for the phoenix has no real basis but is purely a matter of chance. We shall see, however, that Manilius provides another datum showing a

[1] See p. 82.
[2] See p. 85, n. 4.
[3] See p. 69, n. 2.

distinct relationship with Hesiod's riddle and its original meaning.[1] Those who prefer to see the agreement as chance, leave the explainable unexplained. We, however, must conclude that the sexagesimal version existed and that in this version too the generations were taken as years. We shall see, further on, how the latter view was reached.[2] It will suffice here to say that the indicated method offers the first possibility for the demonstration of a distinct relationship between the intriguing 972 generations of Hesiod and the 540 years of Manilius.

We can go one step further and formulate the hypothesis that the 500 years assigned to the phoenix by Herodotus, Ovid, and many others was originally a rounding off of the 540 years mentioned by Manilius. This must remain a hypothesis, because no strict evidence can be put forward to support it. It is, however, just as probable as the view that the 500 years represent a rounding off of 487 years, the completely fictitious third of an Egyptian Sothic period.[3]

A few remarks are required concerning the third possibility mentioned above for the calculation of Hesiod's riddle, in which the ages found for the animals and the Nymphs were expressed in Heraclitean generations of 30 years. The 324,000 years of the Nymphs proved to comprise 10,800 Heraclitean generations. If here too the word generation is taken as the indication of a year, the lifespan reached for the Nymphs is 10,800 years. Now, in Censorinus we find the statement that Heraclitus put the duration of a Great Year at 10,800 years.[4] And it may also be recalled that according to Plutarch there was a tradition that the lifespan of the Nymphs in Hesiod's riddle was related to the duration of the cosmic period of the Great Year.[5] This reasoning reveals a clear relationship between the generation and the Great Year of Heraclitus, determined by Hesiod, *frg.*

[1] See p. 103-104.
[2] See p. 96.
[3] See p. 28, 31.
[4] Heraclitus, *frg.* A. 13 (*FVS*, I, 147 = Censorinus, *De die natali*, 18, 11): *hunc (sc. magnum annum) ... putavit annorum vertentium... Heraclitus et Linus XDCCC*. Aëtius, *De plac. philos.*, II, 32, 3, however, mentions 18,000 years: Ἡρακλεῖτος ἐκ μυρίων ὀκτακισχιλίων ἐνιαυτῶν ἡλιακῶν (τὸν μέγαν ἐνιαυτὸν εἶναι) which Diels, in Heraclitus, *frg.* A. 13, changed, following Censorinus, into μυρίων ὀκτακοσίων.
[5] See p. 80, 81.

304. The usual way of relating the two Heraclitean periods is to assume that he put the Great Year at 360 "days" each representing a generation, according to the equation 1 : 360 = 30 : 10,800.[1] It is quite possible that this relationship was also drawn in the ancient world, even though no evidence for this is available. If the following explanation of Hesiod's riddle is correct, however, it must be considered unlikely that Heraclitus arrived at his duration of the Great Year by the same route as that assumed, however plausibly, by modern research scholars.[2]

The existence of the sexagesimal version—which is indicated in Aristophanes and explains the 540 years given for the phoenix by Manilius—raises the question of whether the origin of the riddle must not be sought in Mesopotamia, where a system of sixties had been used from the earliest times. This indeed proves to be the case, and brings us to the original meaning of Hesiod's verses, to reach which we must start from a Babylonian conception of the duration of the Great Year.

Around 280 B.C., the Babylonian Berossus, a priest of Bel, wrote a work called *Babyloniaca*, in which he made the history and the astronomical and astrological science of his own country known to the Greek world.[3] In the second volume of this work he states

[1] *Cf.* for the Heraclitean generation and the Great Year, K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philisophie*, 2nd ed., Frankfurt am Main, 1959, 183-199; H. Fränkel, *Heraclitus on the notion of a generation*, in *AJPh*, 59, 1938, 89-91 (= *idem, Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*, 2nd ed., Munich, 1960, 251-252; K. Reinhardt, *Heraclitea*, in *Hermes*, 77, 1942, 228-235 (= *idem, Vermächtnis der Antike*, Göttingen, 1960, 78-83); G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus. The cosmic fragments*, Cambridge, 1954, 294-305, and the review by G. Vlastos, in *AJPh*, 76, 1955, 310-313; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A history of Greek Philosophy*, I, Cambridge, 1962, 458; M. Marcovich, *Herakleitos, 10*, in *RE*, Supplementband X, 1965, 300-303. B. L. van der Waerden, *Das grosse Jahr und die ewige Wiederkehr*, in *Hermes*, 80, 1952, 142 sees the 10,800 and the 18,000 years as 3 and 5 Babylonian *sars*, respectively; Marcovich, 302, seems to have taken the 3 *sars* as a fixed Babylonian astronomical period, since he mentions van der Waerden's suggestion as an alternative for the equation given by Reinhardt, Kirk and Vlastos.

[2] See also p. 133-137.

[3] In addition to the references on p. 74, n. 3, 4, for a general discussion of Berossus see: C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Berossos*, in *Real-lexikon der Assyriologie*, II, Berlin-Leipzig, 1938, 1-17 and W. Spoerri, *Berossus*, in *Der kleine Pauly*,

that before the great flood, ten kings had ruled in Mesopotamia for 432,000 years.[1] In indicating the various periods of these reigns he made use of the following Babylonian numerical units: 1 *sos* = 60, 1 *ner* = 600, and 1 *sar* = 3,600, so that the 432,000 years could be indicated as 120 *sars*. That in doing so he was basing himself on very ancient speculations is shown by two cuneiform texts in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, usually indicated as WB 62 and WB 444, dating from about 2000 B.C. According to the former, ten kings ruled before the flood for 456,000 years, and according to the latter, eight kings for 241,200 years.[2]

Berossus interpreted the 432,000 years of the period before the great flood as a Great Year composed of 12 months, each comprising 36,000 years (= 10 *sars*). From his chronological system it can be derived that he thought that from the end of the flood to the death of Alexander the Great, 36,000 years or one month of the new world year had elapsed.[3] It follows from this that he assigned a similar duration (120 *sars*) to subsequent world periods. We have already referred to Seneca's report that according to Berossus the deluge occurs when all the planets are in the sign of Capricorn and that the world conflagration begins when this takes place in the sign of Cancer.[4] On the other hand, there is evidence that Berossus also mentioned a period about five times longer than his Great Year; but

I, 1964, 1548.

[1] Berossus, *frg.* 29-30 (ed. Schnabel, 261-263 = *frg.* 3, ed. Jacoby, *FGrH*, III, C, 1, Leiden, 1958, 374-377).

[2] *Cf.* e.g. H. Zimmern, *Die altbabylonischen vor- (und nach-) sintflutlichen Könige nach neuen Quellen*, in *ZDMG*, 78 (NF, 3), 1924, 19-35, giving on p. 26 a clear synopsis of the lists in Berossus, WB 62 and WB 444. WB 444 with additions translated by F. Schmidtke, *Der Aufbau der Babylonischen Chronologie*, (= Orbis antiquus, 7), Münster, 1952, 70-77.

[3] See E. Meyer, *Das chronologische System des Berossus*, in *Klio*, 3, 1903, 131-134; Lehmann-Haupt, *Berossos*, 11. The 468,000 years from the creation up to Alexander are related to the 470,000 years mentioned by Cicero, *De divinatione*, I, 19, and the 473,000 years in Diodorus Sic., II, 31; for an explanation of these latter numbers, see P. Schnabel, *Die Babylonische Chronologie in Berossos' Babyloniaka*, in *MVG.*, 13, 1908, 234-235. Although with respect to the chronology these studies have long been outdated, it remains true that Berossus took 36,000 years for this period; *cf.* Schnabel, *Berossos und die bab.-hell. Lit.*, (see p. 74, n. 3), 210.

[4] See p. 74.

there is no evidence indicating that by this he meant a fixed world period.[1]

No Babylonian sources are known for the 432,000 years Berossus gives for the period before the flood. That he did not take them out of thin air is shown, however, by the fact that the same number of years plays a part in the Indian system of world cycles: in the *Kalpa* system 432,000 years form the shortest period, called the *kaliyuga*. One *kalpa* is divided into 1,000 *mahayugas* each lasting 4,320,000 years; one *mahayuga* consists of four periods whose durations have the ratio 4:3:2:1. The sequence of the periods therefore follows according to the Pythagorean tetractys, in which the total is ten times greater than the shortest period, the *kaliyuga*, which therefore comprises 432,000 years. According to a different calculation, the four-period *mahayuga* lasts 12,000 "years" each representing 360 ordinary years, which leads to the same result.[2] The important point is that each individual *yuga*, like the day, begins with a dawn and ends with a dusk each occupying a tenth of the intervening period and which probably originally referred to the creation and the end of the world.[3] As a result of this concept, the *kaliygula* of 432,000 years, for instance, is divided into 12 months of 36,000 years each, of which the first and the last are occupied by

[1] Berossus, *frg.* 1 (ed. Schnabel, 251; ed. Jacoby, *FGrH*, III, C, 1, 367-368) mentions a period of 2,150,000 years, given by Schnabel, *Die bab. Chron.*, 235-240, and *Berossos und die bab.-hell. Lit.*, 175-176, followed by Lehmann-Haupt, *Berossos*, 9-10 as 2,160,000 years (= 600 *sar*), the creation taking 1,680,000 years and the end of time 12,000, which sounds rather unlikely, but was accepted by Kubitschek, 65, This question is irrelevant here, because in this context only the number 432,000 is important.

[2] See e.g. H. Jacoby, *Ages of the world (Indian)*, in *ERE*, I, 1908, 200-202; M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, Paris, 1949, 169-172; D. Pingree, *Astronomy and astrology in India and Iran*, in *Isis*, 54, 1963, 238, where many places in the Indian literature are referred to in notes 73-77. Concerning the age of Berossus' number in the Indian speculations, Pingree says: "*It seems likely that it should have become known as a significant number in India at the time when other Babylonian influences were being felt, that is, during the Achemenid occupation of the Indus Valley*". For Berossus and the Indian yuga system, see also B. L. van der Waerden, *Das grosse Jahr*, (see p. 90, n. 1), 140-142, and *idem, Die Anfänge der Astronomie. Erwachende Wissenschaft*, II, Groningen, 1966, 276-278. A. Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1929, 295-305, gives a very dubious discussion of the Babylonian and Indian Great Years.

[3] *Cf.* Eliade, 170.

the coming into being and the final decline of the world. The agreement with the pattern of Berossus, who also took the Great Year as 12 months of 36,000 years each (10 *sars*) is so clear that we must assume that the same conception provided the basis for both systems.

But it remains a question whether the number 432,000 used by Berossus was indeed originally related to a period of 12 months of 10 *sars* each. Several authors have said that the ten Babylonian kings before the flood, with their average reigns of 43,200 years (= 12 *sars*), might have represented 10 months of a world year consisting of 12 months of 12 *sars* each, and that the total world year must thus have been 518,400 years or 144 *sars*. On this basis it has been reasoned that according to Berossus, two more months had to elapse after the flood before the Great Year would come to an end.[1] But this is extremely unlikely, because Berossus considered a period to have been completed with the event of the great flood, as we have seen above. It is quite possible, however, that originally the 432,000 years of the 10 kings before the flood were related to the 10 world months in which the history of mankind took place and which were preceded and followed by a creation and a destruction period each lasting one month, as we have seen in the Indian *yuga* system.

If in addition to formulating this hyposthesis we go on to consider that the tetractic relationship of the four *yugas* in the *mahayuga* was probably borrowed from Mesopotamia together with the number 432,000,[2] it becomes interesting to find out what numbers we obtain if we start with the data of Berossus in the same relationship as in the Indian *yuga* system, and then calculate the duration of the other three periods. If we assume with Berossus that the period before the flood was the first after the creation of the cosmos,[3] we obtain the following system of world years:

[1] H. Zimmern in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1903, 538; *idem*, *Biblische und babylonische Urgeschichte*, in *Der alte Orient*, 2, 3, Leipzig, 1903, 29-30; B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, II, Heidelberg, 1925, 118; A. Jeremias, *Handbuch*, 298, where it is pointed out that this view was put forward in 1857 by M. von Niebuhr; Bousset-Gressmann, 502.

[2] See p. 92, n. 2.

[3] Berossus, *frg*. 29 (ed. Schnabel, 277; ed. Jacoby, *FGrH*, III, C, 1, 375).

	Creation + (1 month)	History of + mankind (10 months)	Decline = (1 month)	World Year (12 months)
I.	43,200 (12 *sar.*) +	432,000 (120 *sar.*) +	43,200 (12 *sar.*) =	518,400 (144 *sar.*)
II.	32,400 (9 *sar.*) +	324,000 (90 *sar.*) +	32,400 (9 *sar.*) =	388,800 (108 *sar.*)
III.	21,600 (6 *sar.*) +	216,000 (60 *sar.*) +	21,600 (6 *sar.*) =	259,200 (72 *sar.*)
IV.	10,800 (3 *sar.*) +	108,000 (30 *sar.*) +	10,800 (3 *sar.*) =	129,600 (36 *sar.*)

Total for the four world years: 1,296,000 (360 *sar*)

If we insert the 432,000 years of Berossus into the *yuga* system in this way, we obtain such remarkable results that we are compelled to continue in this direction. The four world periods, which according to the tetractys are successively shorter, prove together to form a Great Year of 360 "days" each comprising 1 *sar* or 3, 600 years. It may be mentioned that the total number of years here is the same as the number of seconds into which the compass is divided (60 × 60 × 360). But it is even more interesting that in the above scheme of world periods we find an unsought connection between Berossus' 432,000 years and Hesiod's riddle: in the second period the number of years between the creation and end is 324,000, the same number we arrived at when we calculated the lifespan of the Nymphs according to Hesiod.[1] Consequently, it is not excluded that the 432,000 years of Berossus and the 324,000 years of Hesiod both originally came from the system of world periods just developed—a purely arithmetical system having little or nothing to do with astronomy or astrology. We need not continue to speak hypothetically, however, since closer analysis shows that the calculation of the lifespan of the Nymphs in Hesiod agrees with the calculation of the second period in the system of world periods described above.

In this second period, the history of mankind occurs within 10 months, each amounting to 9 *sars*, or in 3,600 × 9 × 10 = 324,000 years. In Hesiod's riddle the lifespan of the raven proved to be calculable at 3,600 years, the phoenix lived nine times longer than the raven, and the Nymphs ten times as long as the phoenix, which means that they lived 3,600 × 9 × 10 = 324,000 years. It is an obvious conclusion that the Nymphs indicate the duration of a human life in the second period, which followed the great flood of

[1] See p. 88.

which Berossus speaks, and that the phoenix symbolizes one month of this period, the raven being an indication of the largest unit used in the calculation (1 *sar*), which at the same time, as we have seen, is equal to the duration of a single day of the four periods forming the Great Year.

Now that we have come this far, the rest of the riddle can be for the most part explained. According to Hesiod, the deer lives four times longer than the crow and the raven three times as long as the deer, so that the raven lives twelve times longer than the crow.[1] The lifespan of the raven (3,600 years), which forms the basic period of the riddle, was evidently both understood and calculated as one year. Of this year the crow indicates the duration of one month (300 years) and the deer that of one season lasting four months (1,200 years), which is in agreement with the Babylonian and Early Greek division of the year into three seasons.[2] In this way the factors of the series of multiplications in Hesiod's riddle (9 — or 5— × 4 × 3 × 9 × 10) can be satisfactorily explained. We furthermore assume that this fragment originally concerned the second of a cycle of four world periods, according to the tetractys each being shorter than the preceding period, as described above.

With this, we have not yet solved all the problems presented by Hesiod's riddle. But we have arrived at the point at which the investigation must be put into the hands of the specialist in the field of Babylonian and Assyrian culture. What would be particularly valuable to know is the original background and meaning of the animals and Nymphs mentioned by Hesiod. This question opens a wide field for speculation into which we shall not enter except for one aspect of interest for further research. In Babylonia the week had five days, so the month had six weeks and the year 72.[3] A similar division was not unknown in Greece.[4] Therefore, the second world period totalling 388,800 years can be divided into 72 weeks of 5,400 years and the 10 months in which life is possible

[1] See text on p. 80.

[2] *Cf.* Jeremias, *Handbuch*, 277 and M. P. Nilsson, *Primitive time-reckoning*, (Acta soc. hum. litt. Lundensis, I), Lund, 1920, 72.

[3] Meissner, *Bab. und Ass.*, II, 396; Jeremias, *Handbuch*, 277; M. A. Beek, *Atlas van het Tweestromenland*, Amsterdam-Brussels, 1960, 150.

[4] F. Boll, *Hebdomas*, in *RE*, 7, 2, 1912, 2549-2550.

into 60 weeks of 5,400 years. Now, according to the sexagesimal version the 324,000 years of the Nymphs has to be calculated as 5,400 × 60. The product of the original multiplication factors—5 (crow) × 4 (deer) × 3 (raven) × 9 (phoenix) × 10 (Nymphs) = 5,400—thus gives the duration of a week of the current world period. One is led to wonder whether the animals and the Nymphs did not originally symbolize the days of the week. To determine the duration of one world week, the generation of 60 years in the sexagesimal version must be equated with one year.

This recalls Cleombrotus' view in Plutarch that in Hesiod "generation" actually means "year", which Homer's commentator characterizes as an opinion of younger poets.[1] We shall see further on that this idea is based on a particular interpretation of Hesiod's riddle,[2] but this does not exclude the possibility that its origin might very well go back to the sexigesimal version. Another influence may have been that in the sexagesimal system the number 60 was taken as the larger unit and was therefore also put as 1. In Mesopotamia, where this numerical system had been in use since the time of the Sumerians, the same symbol could be used for 1, 60, and 60^n. In Hellenistic times, the sexagesimal numbers were written as units in the Babylonian, and via them in the Greek, astronomical tables, in which custom the Babylonians were the most consistent.[3] We still apply this system in the division of the hour and the degree: 1 hour and 1 degree equal 60 minutes and one minute equals 60 seconds. Thus, in the Babylonian script the 5 × 60 years of the life of the crow were noted as 5, and this may later have led to the misconception that in the riddle a generation is the same as a year.

In summarization of the foregoing we may conclude by saying that in our opinion Hesiod, *frg.* 304, refers to the second of a cycle of four world periods succeeding each other according to the tetractys, together forming a Great Year of 360 days each lasting 1

[1] See p. 85, n. 4.
[2] See below, p. 134.
[3] *Cf.* O. Neugebauer, *The exact sciences in Antiquity*, Princeton, 1952, 15-17, also B. L. van der Waerden, *Erwachende Wissenschaft (I). Aegyptische, babylonische und griechische Mathematik*, 2nd ed., Basel-Stuttgart, 1966, 60-67; K. Vogel, *Vorgriechische Mathematik*, II, (Mathematische Studienhefte, 2), Hannover-Paderborn, 1959, 15-19.

sar. The four world periods themselves are to be seen as Great Years of 12 months, the first and the last being occupied by the creation and the end of the world, respectively. In the intervening 10 months, the history of mankind takes place. These 10 months cover 432,000 years in the first period and 324,000 years in the second period. Berossus adopted the former number for the duration of the reigns of the 10 kings before the great flood. In India, where much longer periods were considered, the same number was taken for the last and shortest of the four tetractic world periods, the *kaliyuga*. Both for Berossus and in India, the original concept became unclear, because the 432,000 years unit was taken as a Great Year of 12 months. In Hesiod, *frg*. 304, the original concept is clearly preserved. The calculation of the age of the raven refers to the basic number—the Babylonian *sar* of 3,600 years—which also indicates the duration of one day of the four-period Great Year. This basic number, too, was calculated as one year, the age of the crow indicating one month and that of the deer a season of four months. The phoenix indicates one month of the second world period, which as we have seen could be expressed as nine *sars*: the phoenix lives nine times longer than the raven. The Nymphs symbolize the 10 months occupied by the history of man: they live ten times longer than the phoenix.

The sexagesimal version, with its calculation by powers of 60, clearly betrays its Mesopotamian origin, and must therefore be the oldest. The later opinion that the generation in the riddle must be taken as a year, can be explained most satisfactorily on the basis of this version. In the Greek world the riddle was made even more obscure by the changing of the five human generations of the crow consisting of 60 years each into nine generations of $33\frac{1}{3}$ years each. This implies that in Hesiod's riddle as we find it in Plutarch, the correct reading is "generations of young people".[1]

In the following section we shall discuss the question of whether this explanation of Hesiod, *frg*. 304, is confirmed or at least supported by other Classical sources.

[1] See p. 80, n. 2.

3. Hesiod, *Frg.* 304, The Great Year and the Phoenix

In the discussion of the Classical conception of the Great Year it was mentioned that Plato was the first author to make a clear statement about this cosmic period.[1] He referred to an almost inconceivably long time, which he could characterize only by saying that at the completion of such a cosmic revolution the perfect number of time comprises the perfect year. It remains possible, however, that in another connection he assigned a specific duration to the Great Year.

In the eighth book of his *Politeia,* Plato discusses the question of how an aristocracy can become degraded into a timocracy, i.e. a form of government in which ambition is the dominant principle of the rulers.[2] This occurs, he says, because the Guardians will not be able, by calculation and observation, to determine the appropriate times for birth. In an extremely difficult passage which has given rise to many commentaries he then gives the computation of what is incorrectly called the "nuptial number".[3]

Plato begins by remarking that for the divine creature there is a period embraced by a perfect number.[4] This is reminiscent of his statement that the duration of the Great Year can be expressed in a perfect number. For the elucidation of "the divine creature", reference can be made to the statement in the *Timaeus* that the Demiurge himself was only the creator of the fixed stars, the planets, and the earth.[5] It is therefore probable that the reference in the

[1] See p. 72.

[2] Plato, *Politeia*, VIII, 3 (544d-547c).

[3] Very important: A. Diès, *Le nombre de Platon, essay d'exégèse et d'histoire,* (Extr. des Mém. Acad. des Inscr. et Belles-Lettres, XIV), Paris, 1936; A. Ahlvers, *Zahl und Klang bei Platon,* Thesis Bern, (Noctes Romanae, 6), Bern, 1952, 11-20; M. Denkinger, *L'énigme du nombre de Platon et la loi des dispositifs de M. Diès,* in *Rev. Ét. Grecques*, 68, 1955, 38-76.

[4] Plato, *Politeia*, VIII, 3 (546b): Ἔστι δὲ θείῳ μὲν γεννητῷ περίοδος ἣν ἀριθμὸς περιλαμβάνει τέλειος.

[5] Plato, *Timaeus*, 39e-40b, *cf.* 41a-d. Denkinger, 40, n. 1, has θεῖον γεννητόν pertain to that which is brought forth by the created gods, i.e. man, as described in *Timaeus*, 41a-d, 69c-d. J. Adams, *The Republic of Plato*, II, 2nd ed. by D. A. Rees, Cambridge, 1965, 289, takes the περίοδος of a θεῖον γεννητόν as "*the period of gestation which ends in the birth of a divine creature*"

Politeia to a period comprising a perfect number as belonging to that which the deity generates, should be seen as the duration of the complete cosmic revolution of the Great Year.

But for human creatures, says Plato, there is a geometric number, and this is the one for which he supplies the complex computation already mentioned. Especially since the research done by Diès there has been general agreement that this geometric number, which can be computed in several different ways, is 12,960,000. To provide the long-sought harmony between the various components of this passage, it has been assumed that the perfect number of the divine creature is the same as the whole geometric number holding for human procreation, the component factors of the geometrical number having special relevance for the latter.[1] If this is valid, it may be concluded that in the *Politeia* Plato assumed a duration of 12,960,000 years for the Great Year.

Even if Plato did not mean that the perfect number of the rotation of that which the deity generates is equal to the geometric number, it would nevertheless have to be taken as probable that the number 12,960,000 originally pertained to the duration of the Great Year and that there is a relationship to the concept underlying Hesiod, *frg.* 304, since this fragment assumes a cycle of four successive world eras forming together a Great Year of 1,296,000 years. The Platonic number—which, incidentally, is a Babylonian *sar* squared—is thus ten times Hesiod's value. Plato based the computation of his geometric number on the numbers 3, 4, and 5, the smallest numbers with which the theorem of Pythagorus can be proved: 12,900,000 = $(3 \times 4 \times 5 \times)^4$.[2] One is immediately struck by the fact that in the sexagesimal version of the riddle of Hesiod, too, the product of the numbers 5 (the crow), 4 (the deer), and 3 (the raven) forms the basic number, which may be an indication of a relationship with Plato's computation.[3] In this connection attention must also be drawn to the duration of the Great Year given by Cicero in his lost

(here the world), but it is more likely that this concerns the lifespan of that which the deity has brought forth.

[1] Ahlvers, 19-20, basing himself on 12,960,000 days = 36,000 years.

[2] Denkinger, 64: *Tableau des solutions de l'énigme du Nombre.*

[3] Denkinger, 66-67, has pointed out that Plato combined several existing calculations.

Hortensius, which is 12,954 years.[1] It seems likely that this number is a variant of 12,960, although it is not clear exactly how it was obtained.[2]

Thus, the Platonic number is ten times that of Hesiod and a thousand times that given by Cicero as the duration of the Great Year. This makes it highly probable that Plato's number is also or was originally related to the duration of the great cosmic cycle, and that there must in some way or other be a close connection between the numbers 12,960,000; 1,296,000; and 12,954.[3]

Hesiod's riddle assumes a system of four world periods, each comprising a year of twelve months of which the first and the last are occupied by the creation and the destruction of the world, respectively. The equal world periods of Berossus end alternately in a world inundation and a world conflagration, the former when all the planets are in the sign of the Capricorn, the latter when they are all in the sign of Cancer.[4] We have already pointed out that this astro-

[1] See p. 73.

[2] C. F Lehmann (-Haupt), *Zwei Hauptprobleme der altorientalischen Chronologie und ihre Lösung*, Leipzig, 1898, 196 (= 195, n. 2) had already assumed that 12,954 must be taken as a rectification of 12,960, which had been obtained by more exact calculations, but here he himself introduced an arithmetic error (the difference of 6 years in 12,960 years would amount to 1/1,296th of a year annually). A. Blosse, *Die chronologische Systeme im A.T. und bei Josephus*, in *MVG.*, 13, 2, 1908, 124, n. 12 (*cf.* 112), pointed out that the difference per year amounts to 4 hours or 1/2,160th of a year. The 12,960 can be taken as 12,954 years composed of 360 1/6 days; it is also possible that for some reason the factor 60 was calculated more exactly, as a result of which 216 × 60 = 12,960 has to be written as 216 × 59 35/36. Lehmann, *o.c.*, 196 has pointed to the cycle of 59 years which according to Aëtius, *De plac. phil.*, II, 32, 2, was taken by Oenopides and Pythagoras for the duration of the Great Year and which may be supposed originally to have been related to a 60 year period.

[3] The relationship of these numbers can be conceived in various ways. A Great Year of 12,960,000 years composed of four tetractically successive world periods of which the last is again divided into four similar periods (Hesiod), can be extended until one arrives at the 12,960 years taken by Cicero. It is conceivable that the 1,296,000 years of Hesiod were taken as one month of the world year, of which the Platonic period would indicate the 10 months of the history of mankind. It is also possible that the 12,960 years of Cicero were obtained by dividing Plato's period into 1,000 equal parts, as is also the case for the Indian *Kalpa* (see p. 92).

[4] See p. 74. The relationship between the data in Berossus and in the Indian speculations on the *yuga* system is clearly evident from the later

logical view of the end of the world is based on the rather obvious idea that the Great Year, like the ordinary solar year, has its summer and its winter, which according to Censorinus was even mentioned by Aristotle.[1] Plato did not relate the world flood and world conflagration to specific, actually impossible, stellar constellations. He ascribes the world conflagration to a disastrous deviation of the celestial bodies from their fixed courses.[2] And he does not state anywhere that these world catastrophes mark the termination of the Great Year.

The Pre-Socratics held the view that human life is periodically destroyed by a total flooding and a total desiccation of the earth. This may even be implicit in Anaximander's doctrine of the drying up of the world.[3] In any case, we find this concept clearly expressed in Philolaus, who knew two destructions of the world: one by fire pouring from the sky, the other by water from the moon, released by an inversion of the air; the vapours rising from the earth provide the cosmos with food.[4] We must not visualize this as a sudden

Indian conception that the transition from the last *yuga* to the first of a new cycle occurs when the sun, the moon, Jupiter, and a star coincide in the sign of Cancer; *cf.* Reitzenstein in R. Reitzenstein and H. H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland,* (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, VII), Darmstadt, 1965 (reprint = Leipzig-Berlin, 1927), 55, n. 1, 56.

[1] See p. 73-74.

[2] Plato, *Timaeus,* 22d, *cf. Leges,* 677a-c. In Plato the world catastrophes never lead to the complete destruction of the human race. Berossus himself, in his report on the Babylonian flood, makes no mention of the planets coinciding in the sign of the Capricorn; *cf. frg.* 34 (ed. Schnabel, 264-266 = *frg.* 4, ed. Jacoby, *FGrH,* III, C, 1, 378).

[3] Anaximander, *frg.* A. 27 (*FVS,* I, 88), *cf.* Ch. H. Kahn, *Anaximander and the origins of Greek cosmology,* New York, 1960, 185. For the world periods of Empedocles, see U. Hölscher, *Weltzeitalter und Lebenszyklus. Eine Nachprüfung der Empedokles-Doxographie,* in *Hermes,* 93, 1965, 7-33, and for a conflicting opinion D. O'Brien, *Empedocles' cosmic cycle,* in *The Class. Quarterly,* NS, 17, 1967, 28-40, and *idem, Empedocles' cosmic cycle. A reconstruction from the fragments and secondary sources,* Cambridge, 1969; also G. A. Seeck, *Empedokles, B. 17, 9-13, (= 26, 8-12), B. 8, B. 100 bei Aristoteles,* in *Hermes,* 95, 1967, 30-36.

[4] Philolaus, *frg.* A. 18 (*FVS,* I, 404 = Aëtius, *De plac. philos.,* II, 5, 3): Φ. διττὴν εἶναι τὴν φθορὰν τοῦ κόσμου, τὸ μὲν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ πυρὸς ῥυέντος, τὸ δὲ ἐξ ὕδατος σεληνιακοῦ, περιστροφῇ τοῦ ἀέρος ἀποχυθέντος· καὶ τουτῶν εἶναι τὰς ἀναθυμιάσεις τροφὰς τοῦ κόσμου. *Cf.* W. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* 295, n. 108. According to Tzetzes, *Chiliad.,* X, 534ff., XII, 219ff. and 283ff., Meto,

catastrophe but rather as a slow drying up of the earth until life is no longer possible, followed by a gradual moistening of the earth until it finally drowns in water. Philolaus assumed an unceasing rising and sinking movement of the air and of the accompanying moisture present in the cosmos. Due to the heat of the sun, "the fire that pours from the sky", the water on earth evaporates and the ascending vapours, which form the food of the cosmos,[1] rise together to the moon. When the earth is completely dried out and life has come to an end, the process is reversed, and by the opposite movement of the air the earth is gradually moistened until life revives. It is clear that this conception derives from the observation of the sun's capacity to cause evaporation and of the falling of the dew on clear moonlit nights. In his system Philolaus evokes a magnificant vision of the course of the cosmos in which the immensely long world periods succeed each other as the night the day.

This conception is highly consistent with the idea that one month of the world year is needed for the creation and one month for the destruction of the world. This makes it probable that the four world eras of the Great Year assumed by the riddle of Hesiod were, in the original conception, alternately ended by flooding and drying up of the world. The first period of which Berossus speaks was terminated by a world flood, from which it follows that the second period referred to in Hesiod, *frg.* 304, would have to end in "fire". In Plutarch's discussion on the riddle, Demetrius holds the opinion that it concerned the *ecpyrosis*.[2] There is no objection whatever to the assumption that here Plutarch has preserved rather accurately an original element of the meaning of the riddle. It is true that Cleombrotus rejected this view as a Stoic interpretation, but we need not think here of the cosmic *ecpyrosis* of the Stoa but rather of the slow drying up of the earth of the Pre-Socratics. This is indeed assumed in Demetrius' view: the Nymphs, who in our construction symbolize

the astronomer, also taught a periodic destruction of the world; *cf.* for the reliability of this report Burkert, 293, n. 94.

[1] According to Aëtius, *De plac. philos.*, II, 17, 4, this was taught as early as by Heraclitus, *cf. FVS*, I, 146, and later especially by the Stoics, *cf.* J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, II, Lipsiae, 1913, 196-201, *passim*, and below, p. 338-339.

[2] See p. 81, n. 4.

life on earth, would cease to exist along with the water.

In Hesiod, *frg.* 304, the phoenix represents one month of the second world period with a duration of 32,400 years. This number can be calculated according to the sexagesimal version as 540 × 60. We have already seen that according to Manilius the age of the phoenix is 540 years, because in the sexagesimal version, too, the generation (60 years) was taken as one year.[1] That the 540 years of the phoenix in Manilius were certainly determined by Hesiod's riddle, is additionally evident from the fact that the conception of the phoenix as symbol of a world month can also be inferred from his report.

To clarify this point we must start with Manilius' view that the phoenix is a symbol of the Great Year, even though this at first sight seems to contradict the foregoing. We have already pointed out that Manilius had the lifespan of the phoenix coincide with a complete cosmic revolution.[2] But to this he added some interesting information, since he says that the Great Year starts around noon of the day on which the sun enters the sign of the Ram. This date is also indicated as the beginning of the Great Year by other authors: it is the first day of spring.[3] At the same time, Manilius says that when he wrote his work, during the consulate of P. Licinius and Cn. Cornelius, i.e. in 97 B.C., 215 ordinary years of the current Great Year had elapsed.[4] This implies that he took the beginning of the Great Year as 312 B.C., at the beginning of the Seleucid Era.[5] This statement leads to several interesting conclusions.

Seleucus I, who had gained control of the satrapy of Babylonia in 321 but was forced to flee to Egypt in 316 B.C., finally re-established

[1] See p. 89.
[2] See p. 75.
[3] The sun enters the sign of the Ram on the 17th of March according to the Julian calendar; *cf.* Ginzel, II, 281. The Greeks rather generally placed the day and night equinox of spring on the 1° of the Ram; Eudoxus and Meto shifted it to the 8°, in which they were followed by Caesar (24th of March); *cf.* Ginzel, II, 420-421, 282. See also Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, Darmstadt, 1958, (reprint = Stuttgart, 1924), 16.
[4] Pliny, X, 5: *Hoc autem circa meridiem incipere quo die signum arietis sol intravit, et fuisse eius conversionis annum prodente se P. Licinio Cn. Cornelio Cos. CCXV*. For the year 97 B.C., see E. Manni, *Fasti ellenistici e romani, 323-31 a.C.*, (Suppl. a "Kokalos", 1), Palermo, 1961, 105.
[5] For this, see Ginzel, I, 136-137, III, 40-42, and Kubitschek, 70-73.

himself in Babylonia in 312.[1] It is probable that in Babylon the new ruler was lauded as the inaugurator of a new era and that it was said that with him a new month of the world year had begun, marked by an appearance of the phoenix. This is shown by the following evidence.

We have seen that Berossus equated the period from the great flood to the death of Alexander the Great with one month of the second world year.[2] He dedicated his work to the second Seleucid, Antiochus I,[3] and it is therefore obvious that his text would contain elements flattering the Seleucids. It is safe to assume that one of these elements was that the commencement of their dynasty opened a new world period, i.e. a new month of the world year, in which he seems to have included the ten turbulent years after the death of Alexander as belonging to the period of the Seleucids. This is confirmed by Manilius' report that the beginning of the Seleucid Era was marked by an appearance of the phoenix, whose age, according to our explanation of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, coincides with the duration of one world month. It is clear that we are concerned with identical conceptions in the reports of Berossus and Manilius.

It follows from all this that the meaning of the phoenix in Hesiod's riddle was known in Babylonia at the beginning of the Seleucid Era: the bird symbolized the commencement of a new world month. It is clear from the 540 years given by Manilius for the phoenix that this was the sexagesimal version of the riddle, which is hardly surprising in view of its Babylonian origin. Therefore, Manilius must have taken his data from an Oriental-Hellenistic source. It need hardly be said that this represents a powerful argument for the validity of the elucidation of Hesiod, *frg.* 304 given above.

The appearance of the phoenix at the beginning of the Seleucid Era, coincided with the appearance of a new ruler and with the beginning of a new era. As far as we know, this was the first time

[1] For the events of this period, see e.g. W. W. Tarn, in *The Cambridge ancient history*, VI, Cambridge, 1927, 480-489.

[2] See p. 91. Lehmann (-Haupt), *Zwei Hauptprobleme*, (see p. 100, n. 2), 105-108 assumed that by Alexander, Berossus meant his posthumous son Alexander IV of Macedonia.

[3] Berossus, *frg.* 51 (ed. Schnabel, 273 = *Test.* 2 (*cf. frg.* 8b), ed. Jacoby, *FGrH*, II, C, 1, 364-365).

that a relationship was drawn between the phoenix and these events. Later, both aspects of the symbolism of the phoenix, linked together to a variable degree, are encountered repeatedly, although it is no longer evident that there was any awareness of the original connection with Hesiod's riddle. We must go into these cases in some detail, because they show how the phoenix could become a symbol of the Great Year itself.

The appearance of a new ruler on the scene and the beginning of a new era were seen as a return to the Golden Age, the fortunate state of things that had prevailed at the beginning of the Great Year. This is clearly shown by the symbolism of the phoenix on a number of coins of Roman emperors. In this connection we need point only to the coins struck for Hadrian in A.D. 121/122, the reverse bearing the legend *Saeculum aureum*. The idea of the cosmic rotation of the Great Year is suggested by the representation of the Zodiac, within which is placed the figure of Aion holding in his hand a globe surmounted by the phoenix.[1] We may also mention here the coins of Antoninus Pius from the second and sixth years of his rule, the reverse bearing a representation of the phoenix with the legend Αἰών.[2] In this case the idea of the return to the Golden Age again plays a role, here in a double sense, determined on the one hand by the inauguration of the new emperor and on the other by the renewal of the Sothic period in A.D. 139.[3]

Within this closely woven complex of ideas the phoenix, which in Hesiod and in the time of Seleucus I still indicated the period of one month of the world year, became as a matter of course a symbol of the Great Year. This is why Manilius, whose report shows a distinct relation to Hesiod's riddle, could write that the life of the phoenix coincides with a complete cosmic rotation.

These interrelated concepts also explain how the phoenix could become a symbol of the Sothic period in Egypt. That the phoenix was related with this period in Graeco-Roman times is beyond any

[1] See pl. VI, 3. The correct explanation of this coin is given by D. Levi, *Aion*, in *Hisperia*, 13, 1944, 287-295; *cf.* also J. Beaujeu, *La religion romaine à l'apogée de l'Empire, I: La politique religieuse des Antonins (96-192)*, Paris, 1955, 152-157.

[2] See pl. VI, 8, 9.

[3] See p. 70.

doubt: the texts are unequivocally clear on this point, and we shall see later that it is also evident from the iconography of the bird in Egypt.[1] We have already pointed out that indications of this conception can be found in the old Egyptian ideas concerning the *benu*.[2] Each New Year's day was seen as a return to the beginning, a re-presentation of the primeval act of the Creation. In the beginning the *benu* had mounted the hill of earth projecting above the primeval waters; and therefore this bird, as incarnation of the deity of creation and of the sun, could also play a role in the mythical conceptions of the commencement of the year. In ancient Egypt the *benu* was never brought into relation with the Sothic period. It may be assumed, however, that the conceptions attached to the first day of the new year came to hold even more strongly for the beginning of the Sothic period: it signified the return to the beginning of the world, a new creation.

Because of the parallelism between the Greek and Egyptian conceptions on this point, it was virtually inevitable that the phoenix would become a symbol of the Sothic period and that this bird would be identified with its beginning. Like other purely astronomical cycles, that of Sothis was regarded as a Great Year, although actually in a derivative sense.[3] The original mythic conception of the Great Year, with the return to the beginning of the world and the renewal of all things, was also transferred to this astronomical Great Year. In the way just indicated, the phoenix became a symbol of the Great Year, the inaugurator of a new era. It would indeed have been remarkable if in Hellenistic Egypt, on the basis of all this, its appearance had not been connected with the beginning of the Sothic period.

This connection was perhaps first made under Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.), in the ninth year of whose reign (238) the well-known Decree of Canopus was issued at a large gathering of Egyptian priests. In this document the salutary rule of Ptolemy III was praised to the skies and a number of measures intended to extend the divine worship of this ruler and his spouse were announced. At

[1] See p. 238-246.
[2] See p. 22-24.
[3] See p. 70, 76.

the same time, however, it represented an attempt to reform the calendar, because the ordinary civil year had advanced so far beyond the solar year that typically summer festivals fell during the winter. It was therefore decided that every four years a sixth day would be added to the five intercalated days, as a leap-day, and to have New Year's day thenceforth coincide with the ascension of Sirius on the first of the month of Payni.[1]

The Decree of Canopus was clearly intended to inaugurate a new era but the success of this calendar reform does not seem to have been great.[2] It is in this light that we must read the so far unexplained report of Tacitus that the phoenix appeared in the time of Ptolemy III.[3] Evidently, an attempt was made to add authority to the new calendar by invoking an appearance of the phoenix, the herald of a new era. It is not impossible that in this case the example of the appearance of the phoenix at the beginning of the Seleucid Era served as inspiration.

The calendar of Canopus was not viable because it required the celebration of all the most ancient religious festivals on new dates. From the polemics against the proposed reform it is perhaps possible to explain another point in Tacitus, i.e. that the phoenix first appeared in Egypt in the time of King Sesosis.[4] It has often been assumed that this referred to Sethos I (*ca.* 1300 B.C.).[5] It is true that a few years before this ruler came into power, the Sothic period began that, according to Censorinus, terminated in A.D. 139.[6] Al-

[1] See H. Volkmann, *Ptolemaios III Euergetes*, in *RE*, 23, 2, 1959, 1674-1676 and R. Böker, *Zeitrechnung, I. Ägypten*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 9, 2, 1967, 2417-2418.

[2] Volkmann, 1675, Böker, 2418.

[3] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: ... *prioresque alites Sesoside primum, post Amaside dominantibus, dein Ptolemaeo, qui ex Macedonibus tertius regnavit, in civitatem, cui Heliopolis nomen, advolavisse.*

[4] See n. 3.

[5] E.g. Koestermann, *Annalen*, II, 307; H. Kees, *Sesostris*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 2, 1921, 1861, takes Sesosis in Tacitus as Sesostris.

[6] K. Sethe, *Sethos I und die Erneuerung der Hundssternperiode*, in *ZAS*, 66, 1931, 1-7 saw in several inscriptions of this king a distinct reference to the start of a new Sothic period, but this view has proved to be almost certainly incorrect; *cf.* E. Drioton and J. Vandier, *Les peuples de l'Orient méditerranéen*, II, *L'Égypte*, 4. éd., Paris, 1962, 386, and especially J. Černy, *Note on the supposed beginning of a Sothic period under Sethos I*, in *Journ. of*

though Egyptologists do not agree on the exact date of this event and of the related rule of Sethos I, the date is not of great importance in this connection. From Tacitus it can be inferred that in Hellenistic times, when the exact duration of the Sothic period had finally been determined, an attempt was made to date the beginning of the current cycle in Egyptian history. In view of the results of modern research, this attempt was rather successful. It was assumed that the phoenix had appeared around the time of the recommencement of the Sothic period during the rule of Sethos I, and this may have been done in deliberate opposition to the calendar of Canopus: if the bird had indeed shown itself at the beginning of the then current period, its appearance in 238 B.C. must have been contrived, because at that time the required number of years for its reappearance was far from being fulfilled.

Tacitus mentions still a third appearance of the phoenix, one which must also derive from Egyptian traditions; he says that the bird showed itself in the time of King Amasis (569-526 B.C.).[1] There is no evidence whatever that in this case the phoenix served as a symbol of the Sothic period. Its appearance was placed not only at the beginning of a new era but also sometimes at the end of the preceding period. The symbolic significance of these two conceptions differs only slightly; we shall discuss it further in the following section. The death of Amasis meant the end of Egyptian independence, which became a fact six months later when the country fell to the Persians. It is therefore understandable that it was later thought that an event of such proportions must have been marked by an appearance of the phoenix.

The conclusion to which these considerations lead us is the opposite of current opinion. The phoenix was not, from ancient times onward, a symbol of the Sothic period in Egypt and did not on this basis become a symbol of the Great Year and of a new era in the Classical world; from the very beginning it was seen in Greece

Eg. Arch., 47, 1961, 150-152, and E. Hornung, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des Neuen Reiches*, (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, 11), Wiesbaden, 1964, 17. Drioton and Vandier, 354, give the dates of the reign of Sethos I as 1312-1298 B.C.; Hornung, 108, gives 1306/1300-1290 as certain dates and the beginning of 1304-2.6.1290 as the most likely.

[1] See p. 107, n. 3.

rather as the inaugurator of a new period in history or of the Great Year itself and was on this basis associated in the Hellenistic world with the Sothic period. This is why it could be said to have appeared during the time of King Amasis even though a Sothic period did not begin during his reign. The Egyptian *hierogrammateus* Chaeremon (first century A.D.), too, did not relate the age of the phoenix to the duration of the Sothic period. According to Tzetzes, Chaeremon put the lifespan of the phoenix at 7,006 years.[1] It is possible that Tzetzes did not transmit Chaeremon's text accurately, and it has therefore been assumed that this number is related to the 7,777 years which, according to Aëtius, some assigned to the Great Year.[2] The difficulty is, however, that Aëtius too is not always reliable, so that we may speculate about the original form of this number and the calculation on which it was based but cannot draw any certain conclusions about it.[3]

In this section an attempt has been made to show that arguments can be put forward in support of our elucidation of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, on the basis of other Classical texts. According to our explanation, in Hesiod the age of the phoenix indicated the duration of a world month, which, as Manilius conveys, was still known at the beginning of the Seleucid Era. This led to a new evaluation of the idea that the phoenix was a symbol of the Great Year. Although we shall present, in a later section, an interpretation we believe was given of the riddle of Hesiod in Classical times, it will be appropriate here to make a few remarks on the question of whether Hesiod was indeed the author of the fragment under discussion.

We have seen that these verses contain the calculation of the du-

[1] Chaeremon, *Hieroglyphica, frg.* 3 in Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 395-398, (ed. Jacoby, *FGrH*, III, C, 1, 147); see p. 72, n. 2.

[2] Sbordone, *La fenice*, 46, *cf.* Aëtius, *De plac. philos.*, II, 32, 5: Ἄλλοι δὲ διὰ ἑπτακισχιλίων ἑπτακοσίων ἑβδομήκοντα ἑπτά.

[3] It may be assumed that the figures 7,006 and 7,777 both go back originally to 7,776. According to our explanation of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, the phoenix there indicates a month of the world year; 7,776 may have been arrived at by taking, for obscure reasons, the "generation" in Hesiod's riddle as a period of 8 years ($972 \times 8 = 7{,}776$); 7,776 may also have been taken as the duration of a world month with 6 weeks, each lasting 1,296 years; another possibility is that a Great Year was taken as consisting of 72 weeks, each lasting 108 years.

ration of the second of a cycle of four world eras diminishing in length according to the tetractys and which together form a Great Year of 360 Babylonian *sars*. This immediately recalls the celebrated passage in Hesiod's *Erga* concerning the five world periods of the gold, the silver, the bronze, the Heroic, and lastly the iron generation to which the poet, to his sorrow, belongs.[1] It has been remarked often enough that a generation of Heroes is hardly consistent in this series, however essential a component it was for Hesiod himself.[2] It is know with certainty that this myth originally included only four world periods characterized by metals, each successive period being morally worse, and life becoming increasingly difficult and shorter from one to the other. The question of whether Oriental influences were involved here is highly controversial. Reitzenstein in particular has argued connections between the four periods (and the metals belonging to them) and the Indian *yuga* system as well as with the related conceptions in the Persian *Bahman-Yast* and in *Daniel* ii. 31-45. There has, however, been considerable objection to his views, both because of their All-Iranian tendencies and because of the fact that he based himself on sources dating from times many centuries after the work of Hesiod.[3]

This entire problem has entered a new phase, because it is now

[1] Hesiod, *Erga*, 109-201.

[2] See e.g. J. Kerschensteiner, *Zu Aufbau und Gedankenführung von Hesiods Erga*, in *Hermes*, 79, 1944, 166-172; Th. G. Rosenmeyer, *Hesiod and historiography*, in *Hermes*, 85, 1957, 257-285 (now also in a German translation in *Hesiod*, ed. by E. Heitsch, (Wege der Forschung, XLIV), Darmstadt, 1966, 602-648); A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 2nd ed., Bern-Munich, 1963, 121-122 and especially J.-P. Vernant, *Le mythe hésiodique des races*, in *RHR*, 79 (157), 1960, 21-54; also e.g. H. C. Baldry, *Who invented the Golden Age?*, in *Class. Quaterly*, 46, 1952, 83-92; J. Gwyn Griffith, *Archaeology and Hesiod's five ages*, in *Journ. of the hist. of ideas*, 17, 1956, 109-119; and in contradiction H. C. Baldry, *Hesiod's five ages*, *ibidem*, 553-554; see also the studies of Reitzenstein and Heubeck mentioned below.

[3] R. Reitzenstein, *Alt-griechische Theologie und ihre Quellen*, in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 4, 1924-1925, 1-19 (now also in his *Antike und Christentum*, (Reihe "Libelli", 150), Darmstadt, 1963, 1-19 and (see n. 2) *Hesiod*, 523-544) and especially *idem* in R. Reitzenstein-H. H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, VII), Darmstadt, 1965, (reprint = Leipzig-Berlin, 1926), 45-68. For later authors, both pro and contra, see Gwyn Griffith, 115-119, Rosenmeyer, 270, n. 1 (= *Hesiod*, 623, n. 44), and Heubeck, (see p. 111, n. 1), 510, n. 5 (547, n. 5).

absolutely certain that the conceptions concerning the genealogy of the gods in Hesiod's *Theogonia* are related to the Hurrian-Hittite texts from Boghazköy. These texts date from the middle of the second millenium before Christ, and their distinct influence has been demonstrated in the literature of ancient Ugarit. These Oriental conceptions must have penetrated the Greek world before the time of Homer. Along just which pathway this occurred is also a matter of controversy, but it seems probable that it occurred mainly via Phoenicia and the Greek islands.[1] It is assumed that the conceptions we find in Hesiod were already known in the Mycenaean world.[2]

It can hardly be denied at present that in Hesiod many ancient oriental ideas are preserved in Grecian guise. There can consequently be no objection to the assumption that his myth of the five world eras too is a typically Greek rendition of a related Eastern story that knew only four periods.[3] There is also no objection to ascribing to Hesiod the poem on the age of the Nymphs, which reveals the same conception and is unmistakably of Babylonian origin. Both passages

[1] See the extensive, mutually independent surveys of the literature on this subject given by A. Lesky, *Griechischer Mythos und vorderer Orient*, in *Saeculum*, 6, 1955, 35-52 (also his *Geschichte*, (see p. 110, n. 2), 113-116) and A. Heubeck, *Mythologische Vorstellungen des Alten Orients im archaischen Griechentum*, in *Gymnasium*, 62, 1955, 508-525 (both also in *Hesiod*, 571-601 and 545-570, respectively). A good discussion of these problems is given by O. Eissfeldt (ed.), *Éléments orientaux dans la religion grecque ancienne, Collogue de Strasbourg, 22-24 mai 1958*, Paris, 1960. Also see H. Schwabl, *Weltschöpfung*, in *RE*, Suppl. IX, 1962, 1484-1508; P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East*, Cardiff, 1966; and M. L. West, *Hesiod Theogony*, Oxford, 1966, 19-31, who on 106-107 gives an extensive bibliography on "*Hesiod and the East*".

[2] E.g. Schwabl, *Weltschöpfung*, 1506, and West, *Hesiod Theogony*, 28-29.

[3] The objection to Reitzenstein, that he based himself on much later authors, fails to hold water if it is recalled that old Hurrian-Hittite conceptions are to be found in Apollodorus and Philo of Byblos, conceptions taken until recently to be Phoenician-tinted renditions of Hesiod: *cf.* Heubeck, 511-512 (550-551), 517-518 (561-562), Lesky, *Griech. Mythos*, 44 (587), 47 (593) and *Geschichte*, 114, and especially the lectures of O. Eissfeldt, *Phönikische und griechische Kosmogonie*, and H. Schwabl, *Die griechische Theogonien und der Orient*, both in *Éléments orientaux*, (see n. 1), 1-15 and 39-56, respectively. Heubeck, 510 (547) calls Reitzenstein's study: "*den ersten wirklichen Beweis für das Vorhandensein orientalischer Elemente in dem mythologischen Gut des archaischen Griechentum*", although he rejects his views on the time and place of adoption.

of Hesiod are related to the same complex of ideas about the Great Year, which like the solar year comprised four, albeit unequal, periods at the conclusion of which the cycle repeats itself. This last is to be found in the Indian *yuga* system but it is also assumed by Hesiod, since he regrets that he had not died in an earlier period or been born in a later one.[1]

Reitzenstein too thought that this conception was ultimately to be traced to Babylonia,[2] but it is impossible to share his view that Persia formed the link with Greece. Babylonian mythology had a powerful influence on the Hurrian-Hittite world, and distinct traces of this influence can be demonstrated in Hesiod.[3] It is therefore highly probable that the myth of the four world eras found its way to Greece by the same route. This is supported by the argument that the word φοῖνιξ, in the form *po-ni-ke*, occurs in Mycenaean Greek, as was shown in the discussion of the name of the phoenix.[4]

All this is obviously important with respect to the question of the origin of the phoenix myth. We shall return to this point; here it will suffice to say that our elucidation of the poem on the ages of the animals and of the Nymphs forms a strong argument for Hesiod's authorship. This does not mean that it is certain that modifications were not made in the original form of the riddle for particular reasons. We have seen that the sexagesimal version found in Aristophanes and by which the 540 phoenix years mentioned by Manilius can be explained,[5] must be the oldest form. It is also possible that Hesiod too equated the age of the crow with five human generations and that this was later deliberately changed to nine generations. This may be related to a given interpretation of his verses to be discussed below.[6]

[1] Hesiodus, *Erga*, 175: ἀλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι. *Cf.* Vernant, (see p. 110, n. 2), 26 and e.g. K. Seeliger, *Weltalter*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, 6, 1924- 1937, 381.

[2] Reitzenstein, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, 56-57.

[3] *Cf.* e.g. Walcot, (see p. 111, n. 1), 1-26: "The Theogony and the Hittite material", and 27-54: "The Theogony and the Babylonian material".

[4] See p. 62.

[5] See p. 88-89.

[6] See Chapter V, 5.

4. The Appearances

The preceding section has shown how the phoenix became a symbol of the renewal of time in the Classical period, and that on this basis it could more generally become a symbol of any kind of renewal, almost always with the implication that this renewal introduced a period of happiness and good fortune. This symbolism, with a variable emphasis on the renewal of time, forms part of the background of all the appearances of the phoenix mentioned in the Classical and Early Christian literature.

We have already referred to the report of Tacitus that the phoenix was supposed to have appeared under Sesosis (Sethos I), Amasis, and Ptolemy III Euergetes.[1] This passage begins by saying that the phoenix appeared in Egypt during the consulate of P. Fabius and L. Vitellius, i.e. in A.D. 34,[2] and that this had led to heated discussions among Greek and Egyptian scholars.[3] Many held the opinion that this phoenix was not a true one, among other reasons because less than 250 years had elapsed between Ptolemy III and Tiberius.[4] This must have meant the period between the death of Ptolemy (221 B.C.) and the beginning of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, because calculated to the phoenix's appearance in A.D. 34 the interval amounts to 255 years. It is also possible that Tacitus did not have an entirely correct understanding of the dates of Ptolemy III. The meaning of this appearance of the phoenix is clearly shown by the following.

On the authority of Cornelius Valerianus,[5] Pliny states, followed by Solinus, that this phoenix appeared two years later than Tacitus

[1] See p. 107-108.

[2] *Cf.* A. Degrassi, *I fasti consolari dell'Impero romano*, (Sussidi eruditi, 3), Rome, 1952, 10. For more information on both consuls, see E. Koestermann, *Cornelius Tacitus. Annales*, II, Heidelberg, 1965, 305.

[3] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *Paulo Fabio L. Vitellio consulibus post longum saeculorum ambitum avis phoenix in Aegyptum venit praebuitque materiem doctissimis indigenarum et Graecorum multa super eo miraculo disserendi.*

[4] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *Sed antiquitas quidem obscura: inter Ptolemaeum ac Tiberium minus ducenti quinquaginta anni fuerunt. Unde nonnulli falsum hunc phoenicem neque Arabum e terris credidere, nihilque usurpavisse ex his, quae vetus memoria firmavit.*

[5] *Cf.* H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue*, II, Paris, 1956, 140.

indicates, i.e. during the consulate of Q. Plautius and Sex. Papinius.[1] This is also reported by Dio Cassius, who furthermore conveys how this appearance was interpreted: in the same year parts of Rome were flooded by the Tiber, even greater parts were destroyed by fire, and the phoenix appeared in Egypt. These phenomena were later seen as omens of Tiberius' death, which occurred in the spring of the following year.[2] It may be assumed that here the appearance of the phoenix was not taken as an omen of a catastrophic event; rather it must have been the symbol of the new joyous time that was to start when Tiberius' successor took office. The bird can thus not only accentuate the beginning of a new era but also announce its impending arrival.

It is in the latter sense that we have understood the appearance during the time of Amasis mentioned by Tacitus.[3] The various times at which the bird showed itself in Egypt and the resulting shift of emphasis in the symbolism associated with it are probably both to be traced to the difference between the two main versions of the phoenix myth, which will be discussed in detail in due course.[4] According to one version, the *young* phoenix appears in Egypt to bury its dead father; according to the other, it is the *old* phoenix, come to renew itself by fire on the altar of the sun god. In the former case the arrival of the phoenix is an indication that the renewal has already taken place, in the latter that it is on the point of occurring. This explains why the phoenix could be both a symbol of the beginning of a new era and a symbol of the approaching end of the old era. In the latter case the idea of the coming renewal is of course implicit, and obtains the impression that this was particularly true with respect to the appearance in the time of Tiberius. In this connection we must keep in mind the relief and joy with which Caligula's in-

[1] Pliny, X, 5: *Cornelius Valerianus phoenicem devolavisse in Aegyptum tradit Q. Plautio Sex. Papinio coss.*; Solinus, 33, 14: *Q. Plautio itaque et Sex. Papinio cos. Aegyptum phoenix involavit.* For the consuls of A.D. 36, see Degrassi, *o.c.*, 10.

[2] Dio Cassius, LVIII, 27, 1: εἰ δέ τι καὶ τὰ Αἰγύπτια πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους προσήκει, ὁ φοῖνιζ ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἔτει ὤφθη· καὶ ἔδοξε πάντα ταῦτα τὸν θάνατον τῷ Τιβερίῳ προσημῆναι. Abbreviated in Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum*, ed. L. Dindorf, III, Lipsiae, 1870, 10.

[3] See p. 108.

[4] See p. 146.

auguration was greeted. It may be assumed that when Caligula took office in A.D. 37, the appearance of the phoenix was interpreted as heralding the new Golden Age that had meanwhile become a fact.[1]

Pliny and Solinus add to their reports several details that are not found in Tacitus and Dio Cassius. The phoenix said to have appeared in Egypt in A.D. 36 is supposed to have been captured and later to have been brought to Rome at the order of Emperor Claudius for the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the founding of the city and to have been exhibited publicly on the Forum, in the Comitium. These events were recorded in the municipal chronicles, but Pliny says that no one doubted that this concerned a false phoenix.[2] Various considerations must have led to this exhibition of some kind of exotic bird on the Forum.

After the rule of Caligula had ended in madness and terror, it must have been important to Claudius to make a show of the living phoenix that had earlier announced the death of Tiberius. By doing so he could suggest that the Golden Age this bird was thought to announce or inaugurate had only started with his reign. But the same symbolism also held from another point of view: the commencement of a new *saeculum* in the history of Rome also meant the renewal of the joy associated with the Golden Age, and it was logical that this would be confirmed by an appearance of the phoenix.[3]

According to Pliny, no one took this phoenix seriously, probably because it would be considered that any phoenix that allowed itself to be captured could not be the real one. Tacitus too notes that it was generally thought that the phoenix he said appeared in A.D. 34 was a false one, had not come from Arabia, and had not done any of the things that ancient tradition said it should have done.[4]

[1] E. Köberlein, *Caligula und die ägyptischen Kulte*, (Beitrage zur klass. Philol., H. 3), Meisenheim am Glan, 1962, 41-43, has collected a number of texts clearly showing to what extent the start of Calugula's rule was experienced as the return of the Golden Age. See also below, p. 000.

[2] Pliny, X, 5: *Allatus est et in urbem Claudii principis censura anno urbis DCCC et in comitio propositus, quod actis testatum est, sed quem falsum esse nemo dubitaret.* Solinus, 33, 14: *captusque anno octingentesimo urbis conditae iussu Claudii principis in comitio publicatus est. Quod gestum, praeter censuram quae manet, actis etiam urbis continetur.*

[3] *Cf.* e.g. K. Seeliger, *Weltalter*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, 6, 1924-1937, 423.

[4] See p. 113, n. 4.

It may assumed that the reports of Cornelius Valerianus cited by Pliny and of Tacitus concern this same appearance, and it is also probable that either by mistake or deliberately, for a reason no longer clear, Tacitus dated this appearance two years earlier.[1]

In later times the appearance of the phoenix on the occasion of the celebration of Rome's 800th anniversary was taken seriously, and no further reference is made to the fact that it was actually supposed to have appeared earlier during the time of Tiberius. According to Aurelius Victor, who wrote around A.D. 360, the 800th anniversary of the founding of Rome was celebrated in the sixth year of Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54) and the phoenix appeared in Egypt at the same time.[2] The same report is found in the consular list of A.D. 387, where it is mentioned, in conjunction with the consulate of Vitellius II and Publicola in A.D. 48, that the phoenix first appeared in that year.[3] The phrasing implies an open attack on the opinion of Pliny and Solinus that this phoenix had actually appeared in A.D. 36. Even Dexippus, who lived about a century before Aurelius Victor, had mentioned the appearance in the time of Claudius. We have already referred to his report that according to the Egyptians, at that moment 650 or 654 years had elapsed since the preceding appearance of the phoenix.[4] The tradition is not sufficiently detailed to convey just what Dexippus said and meant.

[1] R. Syme, *Tacitus*, II, Oxford, 1958, 472, n. 2, points to the structural function of the digression on the phoenix in the work of Tacitus: "*relief in the middle of a chronical of murders*". Following P. L. Strack and others, he relates to this some conclusions concerning the dating of the *Annales* (p. 472-473, 771-774), while assuming that in the passage on the phoenix Tacitus had in mind Hadrian's coins from A.D. 118 (see below, p. 237). According to Syme, Tacitus wrote: "*For variety, for mockery—and to demonstrate in a gentle and insidious fashion that prophecies and portents have no meaning*" (p. 774). This argument for dating the work after A.D. 117 is rejected on good grounds by H. Castritius, *Der Phoenix auf den Aurei Hadrians und Tacitus' Annalen VI, 28*, in *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*, 14, 1964, 89-95.

[2] Sextus Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 4, 14: *Huius anno sexto, cum quattuordecim regnarit, octingentesimus urbis mire celebratus, visusque apud Aegyptum phoenix.*

[3] *Fasti Vindobonenses*, ed. Mommsen, *MGH, a.a.*, IX, Berolini, 1892, 282 = *Consularia Ravennatica*, ed. Frick, *Chron. min.*, I, Lipsiae, 1892, 379: *Vitellio II et Publicola his cons. phenix apparuit primum.* For both consuls, see also Degrassi, 14, (see p. 113, n. 2).

[4] Dexippus, *frg.* 11, see p. 69.

It has been assumed that for this period he based himself on the Egyptian tradition preserved by Tacitus, according to which the phoenix had appeared during the time of King Amasis.[1] This does not seem improbable, even though 650 or 654 years is too long for the period between Amasis and Claudius.

The reports of the appearance of the phoenix under Tiberius and Claudius can thus be said to have been entirely determined by the symbolism of the bird. We find the same symbolism on numerous coins of later emperors bearing such legends as *Saeculum aureum, Aeternitas, Felicium temporum reparatio*, often accompanied by a representation of the phoenix.[2]

The importance of the foundation of a city or a temple could also be accentuated by an appearance of the phoenix. In the twelfth century John of Salisbury was able to report that at the founding of Constantinople the phoenix appeared as a good omen.[3] Although this is not mentioned by older authors, it is not difficult to see how it could have originated. Many of the coins of Constantine and his sons show the phoenix, and a passage in the *Codex Justinianus* says that his empire was founded under favourable omens.[4]

About a century earlier than John of Salisbury, Bartholomaeus Anglicus made an interesting mention of the phoenix, for which he bases himself on a certain Alanus, possibly meaning Alanus de Insulis.[5] The ultimate source of the tradition thus preserved is not

[1] Jacoby, *FGrH*, II, C, Leiden, 1963, 307 assumes erroneous transmission of the number: *"Die Zahl lässt sich nicht sicher verbessern"*.

[2] See pl. VI, 3, 8, 9; VII, 9; VIII, 1-9. *Cf.* J. Beaujeu, *La religion romaine à l'apogée de l'Empire I : La politique religieuse des Antonius (94-192)*, Paris, 1955, 141-159 (Hadrianus), 369-370 (Commodus).

[3] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, I, 13: *de variis omnibus* (411b): *Fenix singularis felicitatis successus pollicetur, quale est quod Nova Roma viso fenice melioribus auspiciis condita est.* For the following elucidation, see the notes on 411b (ll. 24ff.) in the edition prepared by C. C. I. Webb, I, Oxonii, 1909.

[4] See pl. VIII, 2-8. In view of the similar choice of words, John of Salisbury seems to have been especially influenced by the *Codex Justinianus*, I, 17, 1, 10, (ed. P. Krueger, Berolini, 1877, 108): ... *debere omnes civitates consuetudinem Romae sequi ... Romam aut intellegendum est non solum veterem, sed etiam regiam nostram, quae Deo propitio cum melioribus condita est auguriis.*

[5] In M. Th. d'Alverny, *Alain de Lille. Textes inédits*, (Études de philosophie médiévale, LII), Paris, 1965, there is no indication that this passage was really from Alanus de Insulis, although the latter does mention the phoenix in his *De planctu naturae*, *PL.* 210, 436 A.

known, but it must have been a very old one, because it has to do with the foundation of the Jewish temple in the Egyptian city of Leontopolis, which occurred around 160 D.C.[1] This temple was built on the model of the temple at Jerusalem. Alanus speaks not of Leontopolis but of Heliopolis, an understandable error in view of the close proximity of the two places and the ancient relation of the phoenix with Heliopolis. According to Alanus, at the consecration of the temple the phoenix burned itself together with the offering of unleavened bread and perfumes.[2] It is quite inconceivable that this story could have originated in the Middle Ages, because the episode of this Jewish temple in Egypt was not sufficiently known at that time. Alanus must have transmitted an old tradition that could only have circulated among the Egyptian Jews whose religious centre was located in this temple. An echo of Alanus' curious report is found in some of the manuscripts of the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, in which it is said that in Heliopolis there is a circular temple resembling the one in Jerusalem and that the priest of this temple "has written in a book the date of a fowl that men call phoenix."[3]

In the report of Alanus is it explicitly stated that the high priest Onias lit the fire, at which moment the phoenix appeared and allowed itself to be consumed together with the offering. One may wonder whether this is the original version: the temple at Leontopolis was a deliberate imitation of the temple at Jerusalem, and when the latter was consecrated by Salomon the first offering was,

[1] *Cf.* M. Delcor, *Le temple d'Onias en Égypte*, in *Revue Biblique*, 75, 1968, 188-203 (on 204-205 a postscript by R. de Vaux), of the older literature e.g. E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, III, Hildesheim, 1964 (reprint = Leipzig, 1909), 42, 144-148 and A. Schlatter, *Geschichte Israels von Alexander dem Grossen bis Hadrian*, 3ed ed., Stuttgart, 1925, 122-129, 33, 344. Most important texts: Josephus, *Ant.*, XII, 388, XIII, 62-73, *Bell. Jud.*, VII, 420-432.

[2] Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, XII, 14: *de qua (sc. ave) narrat Alanus, quod cum Onias summus pontifex in Eliopoli civitate Egypti templum ad similitudinem templi Hierosolimorum edificasset, primo die azimonum cum multis lignis aromaticis super altare congregasset et ignem ad offerendum sacrificium succendisset, descendit in medium rogum talis avis que in igne sacrificii statim in cinerem est redacta.*

[3] M. Litts, *Mandeville's travels. Texts and translations*, I, II, (Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, Sec. Ser., 101, 102), London, 1953, 34 (Egerton text) and 253 (Paris text).

according to 2 *Chron.* vii. 1, consumed by fire from heaven. It is not impossible that this sign of divine approval was also claimed for the consecration of the temple at Leontopolis and reinforced by the simultaneous appearance of the phoenix, which according to one tradition also owes its cremation to a heavenly fire. Just how probable this assumption is will become clear in the discussion of the appearances of the phoenix which, according to the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, reinforced the importance of three Biblical events.

The first of these appearances took place when Abel made the sacrifice that found more favour in the sight of God than that of Cain.[1] In Antiquity and in later centuries, both Jewish and Christian theologians actively attempted to explain the basis for this preference and how it was expressed.[2] The *Sermon* does not go into this point, but it is evident that the author knew at least the Early Christian answer to the second question: Fire descended from heaven and consumed Abel's offering. The origin of this tradition is to be found in Theodotion's Greek translation of *Gen.* iv.4 and 5, where the Hebrew word for "have regard for" is translated as "set afire".[3] Jerome and Procopius of Gaza, who mention this translation, also indicate how Theodotion could have come to do so: the former refers to the heavenly fire that descended at the consecration of the temple at Jerusalem (2 *Chron.* vii.1) and to the same event when Elijah sacrificed on Mount Carmel (1 *Kings* xviii.38); the latter refers to the fire of the Lord that consumed the whole-offering and the fat at the first sacrifice made by Aaron and his sons (*Lev.* ix.24) and also to Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel.[4] The texts to which both these early exegetes draw attention show clearly how almost

[1] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 11-16 (see trans., p. 45).

[2] *Cf.* A. Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel in der Agada, den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhammedanischen Literatur*, (Veröffentl. der Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, I), Vienna-Leipzig, 1922, 37-43.

[3] See F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, I, Hildesheim, 1964, (reprint = Oxford, 1875), 17-18.

[4] Jerome, *Hebraicae Quaestiones in Genesim*, ad. iv.4 (*PL*. 23, 944B): *Ignem autem ad sacrificium devorandum solitum venire de caelo: et in dedicatione templi sub Salomone legimus, et quando Elias in Monte Carmelo construxit altare;* Procopius of Gaza, *Catena in Octateuchem*, ad *Gen.* iv. 4 (*PG* 87, 1, 236B): καὶ ὁ μὲν (*sc.* Θεοδοτίων) λέγει τῆς ἀποδοχῆς τὸν τρόπον, ὅτι διὰ πυρός, ὡς ἐπὶ Μωυσέως καὶ Ἠλιοῦ.

inevitable it was that *Gen.* iv.4 and 5 would be interpreted as described. If the first sacrifice in the desert, the first sacrifice in the Temple, and the highly significant sacrifice of Elijah were all sanctioned by the divine fire from heaven, it was obvious to assume that the first sacrifice of which the Bible speaks would also have been lighted in the same manner. According to the Coptic text, thus, the phoenix was consumed together with Abel's sacrifice by the heavenly fire. Although no parallel can be found for this conception in either the Jewish or the Christian literature, it is nevertheless probable that the burning of the phoenix at the consecration of the temple at Leontopolis is related to this complex of ideas concerning a divine omen at a first sacrifice.

Theodotion's remarkable translation is therefore in fact an interpretation of the text in question, which implies that the former must have been of Jewish origin. It is striking, however, that the fire that descended from heaven to consume Abel's sacrifice is mentioned in the Early Christian and Mohammedan literature but does not occur in the older Jewish literature; it is not found until the medieval exegesis of such authors as Rashi, and they could have taken it from Christian or Mohammedan sources.[1] It has aptly been remarked, however, that Theodotion could hardly have given this translation if he had not known of this tradition, and in this connection it was assumed that in the early centuries of the present era the Jews deliberately neglected it in order to avoid giving any grounds for the Christian elevation of Abel as a type of Christ.[2] This is not impossible, but there is still another reason that might have borne more weight: for the rabbis the true cult of God was entrusted to the tribe of Levi and could only be realized after the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests.[3] They therefore stated emphatically that this was the occasion on which the heavenly fire first descended to consume the sacrifice.[4] This would seem to be a polemic against the idea that it could have happened earlier, to Abel's sacrifice.

[1] *Cf.* Aptowitzer, 37-43 and 183.
[2] Aptowitzer, 43.
[3] *Cf.* Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, III, 306-307.
[4] Aptowitzer, 145-146, n. 184 and Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, III, 184, 243-244, IV, 353, VI, 73, n. 380.

According to the Coptic text, at the first sacrifice mentioned in the Bible the bolt of fire was accompanied by an appearance of the phoenix. At the consecration of the temple at Leontopolis, according to the surviving late tradition, only the phoenix appeared, although we have assumed that originally the sign of the heavenly fire may have played a role too. These two phenomena are closely related, but each has its own symbolism. The fire from heaven is a sign that the event has divine approval; it legitimizes the sacrifice. The appearance of the phoenix indicates that the event in question is by God's will the beginning of a new time, of a new era in the history of salvation. As such, the phoenix also emphasizes the legitimacy of the event in connection with which it appears. Against this background it is easy to understand that the Egyptian Jews adhering to the temple at Leontopolis claimed that the phoenix had burned itself up with the first sacrifice made there. There is no objection to the assumption that the tradition that the bird had burned itself up at the time of Abel's sacrifice also had its genesis among the Jews in Egypt and was taken over from them by the Egyptian Christians.

The second appearance of the phoenix is only briefly mentioned in the Coptic sermon: "When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, the phoenix showed itself on the temple of On, the city of the sun".[1] The only parallel to this appearance is found in the Jewish literature, which supports the possibility that the connection with Abel's sacrifice also derives from Jewish sources. The Alexandrine Jew Ezekiel the Dramatist who, probably in the second sentury B.C., wrote the story of the flight from Egypt in the form of a Greek tragedy of which only fragments have survived, has the Israelites meet a "strange astounding animal, such as no one had ever seen".[2] Although this animal is not mentioned by name, the description makes it clear that the phoenix is meant, and this is how it has been taken by all authors since Pseudo-Eustathius.[3] The description occupies the entire fragment, and it is impossible to tell what Ezekiel thought the reason for the appearance of the

[1] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 33-35 (see trans., p. 47).

[2] Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 254-255: εἴδομεν ζῷον ξένον, / θαυμαστόν, οἷον οὐδέπω ὥρακέ τις.

[3] Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaemeron*, *PG* 18, 729d.

phoenix was. Several divergent explanations have been offered,[1] but since the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* also says that the phoenix showed itself during the flight of the Israelites from Egypt, it seems highly probable that both texts must be explained in the same sense. The Coptic text does not say explicitly that the appearance occurred on the first day of the Israelites' departure. That the bird also showed itself at the temple of On-Heliopolis is, as we shall see, of secondary importance, and it is not necessary that it was also mentioned by Ezekiel. In the Coptic text, too, the accent falls on the fact that the phoenix showed itself during the departure from Egypt. Here again, its manifestation marks the beginning of a new era in the history of salvation. Before the meaning of this can be elucidated, we must take up the third appearance of the phoenix mentioned in the Coptic sermon.

In the year of Christ's birth the phoenix is supposed to have burned itself on a pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem.[2] In connection with the translation of this passage we pointed out that in the text as it has reached us, the exact circumstances of this manifestion can no longer be distinguished.[3] The report of this burning begins with a sentence that at first sight seems rather puzzling: "According to

[1] Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, VI, 16, n. 88 seeks the explanation in a well-known legendary motif: "*It seems that the poet wanted to describe how it came about that the Israelites discovered the twelve wells at Elim. They followed the wonderful bird (phoenix?), which ... flew over the wells. In legends birds are frequently spoken of as guides to water*". Both editors of the fragments of Ezekiel: H. Kuiper, *De Ezechiele poeta Judaeo*, in *Mnemosyne*, NS, 28, 1900, 274 and J. Wieneke, *Ezechielis Judaei poetae Alexandrini fabulae quae inscribitur* 'ΕΞΑΓΩΓΗ *fragmenta*, Thesis Münster, 1931, 108 saw in this a reflection of the discussions evoked by the appearance during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes. B. Snell, *Ezechiels Moses-Drama*, in *Antike und Abendland*, 13, 1967, 151, 153 thinks that the appearance of the phoenix before the Israelites promised them the possession of the land of Canaan, just as it was also supposed to have been a good omen for the reign of Ptolemy III. Hubaux and Leroy, 46-50 do not entirely deny a connection with the appearance during Ptolemy III, but relate the bird predominantly to the desert birds referred to in *Exod.* xvi.13; *Num.* xi.31; and *Ps.* lxxviii.27 and to the manna the Israelites received from heaven in the desert (according to the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 6, 11, the phoenix ate τὸ μάννα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὴν δρόσον τῆς γῆς).

[2] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 35-46 (see trans. p. 47).

[3] See p. 42-43.

the number of its years it was its tenth time since its genesis after Abel's sacrifice that it sacrificed itself: in this year now the Son of God was born in Bethlehem". The intention here is to fix the year of the birth of Christ chronologically by means of the phoenix's appearances every 500 years: 500 years must have preceded Abel's sacrifice, and since there were ten more such periods after it, the birth of Christ must have taken place in the year 5500 after the creation of the world. This is a conception we encounter frequently in Early Christian literature.

This dating is related to a Jewish and Early Christian theory of history according to which world time runs parallel with creation time: the world was created in six days, and since for God one day is the same as a thousand years (*Ps.* xc.4, 2 *Peter* iii.8) the history of the world will occupy six such days, after which will come the day of rest of the millenium.[1] It is not entirely clear when this concept reached complete development in Judaism. In the *Book of Jubilees* we in any case find a line of reasoning clearly based on *Ps.* xc. 4: the warning to Adam in *Gen.* ii.17, "for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die" was fulfilled literally, for Adam died when he was 930 years old and that was on the same "day" that he ate of the tree.[2] The *Slavonic Enoch* contains what is probably the first relation of the week of creation to the world week, but however obscure the relevant passage may be in Enoch,[3] in the *Babylonian Talmud* it is clearly stated.[4] In the Early Christian literature the

[1] For the eras mentioned in the following, see especially A. Luneau, *L'histoire du Salut chez les Pères de l'Église. La doctrine des âges du monde,* (Théologie historique, 2), Paris, 1964, *passim,* for the oldest sources and the earliest developments p. 37-53. Also, W. Bauer, *Chiliasmus,* in *RAC,* II, 1954, 1073-1078, and L. Koep, *Chronologie,* in *RAC,* III, 1957, 52-60 (both referring to much earlier literature), and J. Daniélou, *Théologie du Judéo-christianisme,* Tournai, 1958, 341-366. For the later transmission, see also J. H. J. van der Pot, *De periodisering der Geschiedenis,* Thesis Amsterdam, The Hague, 1951, 38ff.

[2] *Jubilees,* IV, 39-40, *cf,* Luneau, 40.

[3] *Slav. Henoch,* 11 (ed. Vaillant, 103-105 = 32, 2-33, 2, trans. N. Forbes in Charles, *Apocr. and Pseud.,* II, 451). Vaillant considers the entire passage to be an interpolation dating from the thirteenth century A.D., and Luneau, 41, n. 2, agrees with him. It will be shown below, however, that these "interpolations" contain very old material (see p. 287ff.). I am not at all certain that Vaillant's linguistic arguments should be considered conclusive.

[4] *Sanhedrin,* 97a (trans. H. Freedman, II, London, 1935, 657).

first occurrence of this idea is in the so-called *Letter of Barnabas*,[1] although of course the conception of the millenium in *Rev.* xx. is also based on the parallelism with God's day of rest after the creation of the world.

In his *Chronographia*, Sextus Julius Africanus has divided the history of the world according to this scheme of six periods, each lasting one thousand years, in which he put the birth of Christ in the year 5500.[2] This last had already been done previously by Hippolytus in his commentary on the *Book of Daniel*, the date having been derived from the dimensions of Noah's ark.[3] We may safely assume, however, that Hippolytus knew this number before he obtained it on the basis of this allegorical exegesis.

The dating of Christ's birth in the year 5500 must have arisen when it became clear that the chiliastic expectations would not be fulfilled as soon as had been hoped. Thus, Hippolytus did his best to demonstrate that this eschatological impatience was not justified, because the sixth millenium was still far from having run its course.[4] The choice of the year 5500 probably had to do with a different way of dividing world time in which twelve periods of 500 years were distinguished.[5]

This latter division of world time, too, must have been of Jewish origin. In this system world time corresponds to the duration of one day of twelve hours. This view is found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the *Testament of Abraham*; the Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch* speaks of twelve periods, characterized as alternately bright and dark, indicated by water from the sky whose clearness changes

[1] *Epist. Barnab.*, 15, 4: προσέχετε, τέκνα, τί λέγει τό· "συνετέλεσεν ἐν ἓξ ἡμέραις". τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι ἐν ἑξακισχιλίοις ἔτεσιν συντελέσει κύριος τὰ σύνπαντα. *Cf.* P. Prigent, *L'Épître de Barnabé I-XVI et ses sources*, Paris, 1961, 67-68.

[2] Luneau, 110, n. 7.

[3] Hippolytus, *In Dan.*, IV, 23, 3, 24, 1-3 (ed. Bonwetsch, *GCS* I, 1897, 243-247). See also p. 126, n. 3 here.

[4] See also Koep, *o.c.* 55.

[5] R. Böker, *Zeitrechnung*, I, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 9, 2, 1967, 2425-2426, thinks that the number 5,500 is related to a Christian world era of 11,000 years: on the basis of *Ps.* xc.4, he says, the important period of 110 days for the duration of the flooding of the Nile was taken as 11,000 years. For this assumed Christian world period not even a single source can be found, and, furthermore, 1,000 × 110 would give a period of 110,000 years. See p. 31 for another of Böker's remarkable views.

twelve times.[1] This scheme underlies Origenes' exegesis of the parable of the workers in the vineyard (*Matth.* xx.1-16). From the fact that in this parable labourers are hired five times on one day, he concludes it is true that there must be five periods, which depends on another conception, but on the other hand he relates the going out of the master at the eleventh hour to the coming of Christ.[2] If we assume that also with this less usual comparison of world time with the duration of one day of twelve hours he had in mind a total period of 6,000 years, the coming of Christ would again fall in the year 5500. Each hour thus comprises a period of five hundred years. What can be inferred from Origenes is explicitly stated by Hilary of Poitiers in his explanation of the same parable.[3]

The author of the Coptic sermon therefore drew on a familiar conception when he placed the birth of Christ in the year of the eleventh appearance of the phoenix, i.e. in the year 5500 after the creation of the world. It is possible that he had already found this in the source from which he borrowed the three appearances at the time of Abel, Moses, and Christ, but it seems more likely that he himself was sufficiently original to indicate the known year of Christ's birth in this way. This is suggested, at any rate, by the context in which the three appearances are placed.

He relates his considerations on the phoenix to the report that at the birth of Christ, God opened the gates of Paradise so that the souls of men could enter. This also held for the soul of Abel, whose blood had continued to cry out since the day Cain killed him but now at last found rest, "so that his blood was silent". Indeed, the Lord had said to Adam when He drove him out of Paraside: "You shall not be able to enter this place in the flesh that has transgressed, unless you are born from water and the Holy Spirit."[4] Here,

[1] *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 29, *Testament of Abraham*, 7, and Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 53-68, *cf.* Luneau, 48-49.

[2] Origen, *Comm. in Matth.*, XV, 32-33 (ed. Klostermann, *GCS*, 40, 1935, 446-448).

[3] Hilary of Poitiers, *Comm. in Matth.*, XX, 6 (*PL* 9, 1030A): *Divisione enim par quingentenum numerum facta, in omni sex millium annorum summa, tempus corporei ortus eius undecimo divisionis totius calculo supputatur;* see Luneau, 235-237, *cf.* also *ibid.*, 266.

[4] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 6-7 (see trans., p. 45).

Christ's words to Nicodemus about entry into the Kingdom of God (*John* iii.5) are related to the re-entry into Paradise.[1] The promise of the re-opening of Paradise at the birth of Christ became one of the stock elements of the abundant Early Christian and medieval literature on Adam, with the frequent qualification that this event would occur in the year 5500. In the Ethiopic *Book of Adam*, in which this promise forms the main theme, the Lord says to Adam that the Word will deliver him when five and a half days have elapsed. When Adam fails to understand this, God explains to him that this means 5500 years, at the conclusion of which he will be permitted to re-enter Paradise.[2] In the *Vitae Adae et Evae* and the longest Latin recension of the so-called *Gospel of Nicodemus*, *John* iii.5 is cited concerning this promise in the same sense as in the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*.[3] This indicates that the author of this sermon must have made use of some Christian work on Adam, where it is probable that he found the date 5500. In speaking of the appearance of the phoenix at the time of Christ's birth, he found an elegant application of this date by putting it that this was the eleventh time that the bird had shown itself.

This appearance was completely visible, since it took place "on the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem", i.e. the place where, according to *Matth.* iv.5, Jesus underwent his second temptation by the devil. The exact location of this is a controversial point.[4]

We have already pointed out that it is impossible to determine

[1] For the identity of Paradise and the Kingdom of God in the *Gospel according to Thomas* and in later authors, see G. Quispel, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle*, (Suppl. to Novum Testamentum, XV), Leiden, 1967, 32-35.

[2] A. Dillmann, *Das christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes, aus dem Aethiopischen mit Bemerkungen übersetzt*, Göttingen, 1853, p. 14, 15, 17, 24, 36, 49, 84, 92, 135.

[3] *Vita Adae et Evae*, 42, ed. W. Meyer, in *Abh. kön. bayer. Akad. der Wiss.*, Philos.-philol. Classe, XIV, 3, 1878, 235; other versions in the ed. by J. H. Mozley, in *Journ. Theol. Stud.*, 30, 1929, 141-142. Other numbers are sometimes substituted for 5,500: Ms. A in Mozley, 142, gives, e.g., 5,228. *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, II, 3 and 12; this last clearly showing the influence of Hippolytus; see p. 124.

[4] See e.g. W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum N.T.*, 5th ed., Berlin, 1958, 1442, s.v. πτερύγιον, and E. Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, (Handbuch zum N.T., 4), 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1927, 28.

precisely from the Coptic text at which events the phoenix showed itself.[1] The writer found himself forced to briefly mention the appointment of the old Simeon in the place of the murdered Zechariah, to which he had not yet referred, as well as the presentation in the temple, because after completing the phoenix passage he intended to proceed to the Benediction of Simeon. In doing so, he did not allow himself to be impeded by the exact chronology of his story. He has the naming on the eighth day, which actually occurred together with the circumcision (*Luke* ii.21), coincide with the presentation at the temple, which occurred on the fourtieth day (*Luke* ii.22, *Lev.* xii.). Because he combined data from *Matthew* and the *Protevangelium Jacobi* with those of *Luke*, he was forced to have Joseph and Mary come to the temple with the Child just after the murder of Zechariah, which according to his earlier account was very closely related to the massacre of the children at Bethlehem.

The Coptic text says that since then no one has seen the phoenix. In view of the foregoing, this would indeed have been impossible, because at the twelfth manifestation of the phoenix world time in the strict sense was to terminate and the millenium of rest for the sanctified would begin. This need not be taken to imply that the Coptic text was written before A.D. 500, since the idea that Christ was born in the year 5500 was also stated in later times.[2]

The appearance of the phoenix at the time of the birth of Christ indicates that a new time has begun. It seems certain that this idea originated in Egypt. The Coptic sermon was delivered at the celebration of the *Commemoration of Mary*, which was originally closely

[1] See p. 42-43.

[2] The chronographer Syncellus (*ca.* A.D. 800) still based his chronological scheme on the year 5500 as fixed year of the birth of Christ: *cf.* R. Laqueur, *Synkellos*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 4, 2, 1932, 1400-1402. According to *Orac. Sibyll.*, VIII, 139, the appearance of the phoenix will annunciate the destruction of the race of the Gentiles, the Hebrew people, and the Roman Empire, which will be the beginning of the end of time. Unfortunately, the text is corrupt, one or more lines seem to be missing. Geffcken (Berlin, 1902, 149) reads, vss. 139-141: ἔνθεν ὅταν φοίνικος ἐπέλθῃ πενταχρόνοιο / ...... / ἥξει πορθήσων λαῶν γένος, ἄκριτα φῦλα, / Ἑβραίων ἔθνος. A. Kurfess, *Phoenix quintus?*, in *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, 3, 1948, 194-195, reads: αὖθις ὅταν φοίνικος ἐπέλθῃ τέρμα χρόνοιο / ἥξει ⟨ὁ⟩ πορθήσων ... etc.; see also his edition and translation (Munich, 1951) and his translation in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, II, 517.

related to the feast of Epiphany and in which the birth of Christ was the most important element.[1] It is known that the early Christians chose the sixth of January as the day of Christ's birth deliberately. In Hellenistic times, in the night between the fifth and sixth, a celebration was held in the city of Alexandria to observe the birth of Aion from Kore, the Virgin.[2] The phoenix was used as the symbolic expression of Aion, as coins of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius have shown.[3] In deliberate contrast to the birth of Aion from a virgin, the early Christians celebrated on the sixth of January the birth of Christ from *the* Virgin: the true Aion-phoenix is the Christ-phoenix. He indeed ushered in a new period.

The appearances of the phoenix during the sacrifice of Abel, the departure from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, and the birth of Christ, are all determined completely by the symbolism of the bird as inaugurator of a new period in history, here the history of salvation. The writer of the Coptic sermon must have used a source in which these three manifestations were logically connected. In his sermon only the appearance at the birth of Christ is relevant; the other two he borrowed from his source without any real need to do so. The original connection becomes clear in the light of a different division of the world time of 6,000 years, which can be traced ultimately to a Jewish origin.

In the school of Rabbi Eliyyahu (*ca.* A.D. 240) it was taught that history can be divided into three periods of 2,000 years; the first period occurred before Moses received the Tablets on Mt Sinai, the the second encompasses the period under the authority of the Torah, and the third comprises the dominion of the Messiah.[4] This opinion must, however, be much older than the time of Rabbi Eliyyahu,

[1] See p. 35-37.

[2] The most important text in Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51, 23, 3-11; of the abundant literature we may mention: K. Holl, *Der Ursprung des Epiphanienfestes*, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, II, *Der Osten*, Darmstadt, 1964 (reprint = Tübingen, 1928), 123-154; B. Botte, *Les origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie*, Louvain, 1932; H. Rahner, *Griechische Mythen in christicher Deutung*, 3rd ed. Darmstadt, 1966, 124-133; R. Pettazoni, *Aion-(Kronos) Chronos in Egypt*, in his *Essays in the History of Religions*, (Studies in the History of Religions), Leiden, 1954, 171-179.

[3] For this, see p. 105.

[4] *Sanhedrin*, 97a (trans. H. Freedman, II, London, 1935, 657).

because the Palestinian traditions transmit, in the name of Rabbi Joshua (*ca.* A.D. 90), that the Messianic time will last 2,000 years.[1] Paul must have had the same concept in mind when he wrote, in *Rom.* v.12-21, about the eras before the law, under the law, and under grace. This division of history into three periods followed by a fourth for the adoration and contemplation of God, had an enormous influence on the Christian Church,[2] although not a single Christian writer kept to the duration of 2,000 years for each period. In one and the same writer's works the three periods and the division into six *aetates* can occur side by side, as in the case of Augustine.[3]

On the basis of all this it seems certain that the author of the Coptic sermon used a source in which the appearances of the phoenix in the times of Abel, of Moses, and of Christ emphasized the commencement of the three periods before the law, under the law, and under grace. There is nothing to show that the writer understood the original sense of these manifestiations; in any case he had in mind the other division of world time, as his reference to the year 5500 shows.

The period *ante legem* extends from Adam to Moses. The Coptic text refers to Abel because his sacrifice is the first event to be mentioned after the expulsion from Paradise (*Gen.* iv.). According to independent traditions, fire struck from heaven not only on the occasion of Abel's sacrifice but also when the phoenix was to be burned on the altar. The similarity between these phenomena may have contributed to the identification of the two events.

The second appearance of the phoenix inaugurated the period *sub lege*. That the Coptic sermon mentions only the exodus and not the handing down of the law on Mt Sinai was not solely to facilitate mention of the burning of the phoenix at On-Heliopolis; it was also consistent with the traditions of Judaism. According to the judgement of the rabbis, a new era had begun with the flight from Egypt: the liberation from slavery and the subsequent ordeals were pre-

[1] *Midrash Tehillim*, 90, 17 (*ad Ps.* xc.15), trans. W. G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, II, (Yale Judaica Series, XIII), New Haven, 1959, 97.

[2] This conception is found in almost all of the Early Christian authors: see Luneau, *passim*. For later authors, into the nineteenth century, see van der Pot, (p. 123, n. 1), 43ff.

[3] For the various views of Augustine, see Luneau, 285-407.

parations for the handing down of the law and bore the closest possible relation to it.[1] We have already pointed out that it is probable that the appearance of the phoenix mentioned by Ezekiel the Dramatist was intended to emphasize the importance of the exodus and the handing down of the law in the history of salvation.[2]

Just as Able the Righteous and Moses the Lawgiver were for the early Christians types, images, of Christ,[3] so did the periods that began with them hold as transitional phases, stages on the way of the salvation by God, which would end in the fulness of time at the birth of Christ. This event marked the arrival at the true turning point in history; the period *sub gratia* had begun. The early Christian writers were tireless in expressing this thought, because it was the foundation on which their faith rested.[4] The appearance of the phoenix at the time of the birth of Christ is a fascinating variation on this fixed theme, and it is remarkable that we have only learned of its existence through a Coptic sermon. The reason perhaps has something to do with the circumstance that in the early Christian symbolism, from the time of Clement of Rome, the phoenix was related almost exclusively to the life, the death, and the resurrection of the Christian.[5] Only in the *Psysiologus* and texts directly influenced by it, such as the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, is the bird a symbol of Christ,[6] the main emphasis falling on the resurrection. This brings us to the last mention of appearances of the phoenix to be discussed in this context.

In the *Greek Physiologus* it is said that the phoenix comes to Heliopolis to burn itself "in the new month, Nisan or Adar, that is to

[1] *Cf.* R. Bloch, *Moïse dans la tradition rabbinique*, in H. Cazelle *et al.*, *Moïse, l'homme de l'Alliance*, Paris-Tournai, 1955, 140-149.

[2] See p. 122.

[3] For Abel, *cf.* Aptowitzer, (see p. 119, n. 2), 23; for Moses, see Bloch, 149-167, and in the same work R. M. Tonneau, *Moïse dans la tradition syrienne*, 250-251; also J. Jeremias, Μωυσῆς, in *ThWNT*, IV, 1942, 862-868, 871-878.

[4] For the birth of Christ as beginning of a new era, see Luneau, *passim* and e.g. Prudentius, *Hymn.*, XI, 57-60 (ed. Lavarenne, I, Paris, 1955, 64): *O quanta rerum gaudia / aluus pudica continet / ex qua novellum saeculum / procedit et lux aurea!* (said to the Virgin Mary).

[5] I *Clement*, 26, I.

[6] *Physiologus*, 7: ὁ οὖν φοῖνιξ πρόσωπον λαμβάνει τοῦ Σωτῆρος. Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 27-28, 51 (see trans. p. 47).

say, Phamenoth or Pharmouthi".[1] This statement is entirely dependent on the symbolic meaning assigned to the phoenix in the *Physiologus*: the resurrection of the bird refers to the death and resurrection of Christ. The Jewish Passover feast is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, i.e. in the first month of the year, "in the new month". The additional mention of Adar, the last month of the Jewish calendar, in the *Physiologus*, is related to the fact that the Alexandrian month of Phamenoth began on the 21th of Adar and ended on the 20th of Nisan. The mention of both Jewish months is probably an attempt to indicate the corresponding place of Phamenoth in the Jewish calendar. It is conceivable that we are concerned here with a gloss.[2] In any case the sequence of the Jewish months is not correct, because Phamenoth began in the month of Adar, and Pharmouthi began in Nisan. We need not go further here into the complicated problems connected with the determination of the Jewish and Christian dates for Passover and Easter and the ecclesiastical quarrels these problems evoked.[3] It will suffice to state that the celebration of the Jewish and the Christian feasts could fall in Phamenoth as well as in Pharmouthi.[4] In the *Physiologus* the resurrection of the phoenix is seen as an image of the resurrection of Christ; to make the similarity even clearer, the rebirth of the phoenix was made to occur in the month of Phamenoth or Pharmouthi.

[1] *Physiologus*, 7: τῷ μηνὶ τῷ νέῳ, τῷ Νησὰν ἢ τῷ 'Αδάρ, τουτέστι τῷ Φαμενὼθ ἢ τῷ Φαρμουθί.

[2] F. Lauchert, *Geschichte des Physiologus*, Strassburg, 1889, 237 and Hubaux and Leroy, XXXII, put Νησὰν ἢ 'Αδάρ (without articles) between parentheses. The most important Ms. M reads only ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τῷ νέῳ, τουτέστιν τῷ Φαρμουθί, see D. Offermans, *Der Physiologus nach den Handschriften G und M*, (Beitr. zur klass. Phil., 22) Meisenheim am Glan, 1966, 39.

[3] See E. Schwartz, *Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln*, in *Abh. d. kön. Gesellschaft der Wiss. zu Göttingen*, Philol.-hist. Klasse, NF, 8, 6, 1905 and K. Holl, *Ein Bruchstück aus einem bisher unbekannten Brief des Epiphanius*, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, II, 204-224; B. Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartadecimaner*, Gütersloh, 1953.

[4] In Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt the Jewish calendar was adjusted to locally current calendars in various ways; for this, see Schwartz, 104-150. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, II, 311 has the month *Nisan* coincide with the Egyptian month *Pharmouthi*. For the date of the Christian Easter, see the lists in Schwartz (13, 17, 24, 25 etc.) and the letter of Epiphanius in Holl, 207, 15ff.

The analysis of the Classical and Early Christian reports concerning appearances of the phoenix given in this and the preceding section, has shown that these manifestations were determined in all respects by the symbolic meaning of the bird. If anywhere, it is here that it can be seen to what extent the symbolism formed the myth.

5. Hesiod, *Frg.* 304, and the Phoenix as Symbol of the Soul

In Plutarch's *De defectu oraculorum*, Hesiod, *frg.* 304, is used as the primary argument for the thesis that demons are mortal.[1] Throughout Classical times it was held that Nymphs have a very long life but are not immortal. They were given the epithet "long-lived" and were seen as demons.[2] We have already seen that in Plutarch demons are taken as souls of the dead.[3] This idea was especially current among the Pythagoreans: the soul was called "demon", a man was εὐδαίμων if he had a good δαίμων.[4] For Empedocles, the soul was nothing more than one of the long-lived demons doomed because of a transgression to take on all kinds of forms of life in the four elements for 30,000 seasons, far from the Blessed.[5] It is striking that Empedocles characterized demons as "long-lived", a word that was usually employed for Nymphs.

That Nymphs could be taken as souls can also be seen from Plato, who included the "long-lived Nymphs" among the souls so pure

[1] See p. 80.

[2] *Cf.* L. Bloch, *Nymphen*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, III, 1897-1902, 526; H. Hester, *Nymphai*, in *RE*, 17, 1937, 1530; W. Süsz, *Hamadryaden*, in *RE*, 7, 1912, 2288 and especially, Detienne, *La notion de DAÏMÔN*, (see p. 79, n. 2), 150-154.

[3] See p. 79.

[4] See Detienne, *La notion de DAÏMÔN*, 62-67.

[5] Empedocles, *frg.* 115 (*FVS*, I, 357), 5-8: ... δαίμονες οἵτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο, / τρίς μιν μυρίας ὧρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι/φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἴδεα θνητῶν / ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους. *Cf.* Detienne, *La "démonologie" d'Empédocle*, in *Rev. Étud. Grecques*, 72, 1959, 1-17 and *idem*, *La notion de DAÏMÔN*, 89-90 and 153, where he also draws attention to Hesiod's riddle, although without offering any new insights. For Empedocles' doctrine of metempsychosis, see H. S. Long, *A study of the doctrine of metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato*, Thesis, Princeton, 1948, 45-62.

that they did not descend to earth but remained in the sphere of fire or, as outer limit, in that of the air.[1] As late an author as Porphyry called the Nymphs a symbol of the Souls that are at the point of being reincarnated.[2]

The concepts demon, Nymph, and soul, consequently, are closely related and can even coincide to an appreciable extent. It is therefore remarkable that in Plutarch the question of the age of the Nymphs is found in a discussion of the mortality of demons, and occurs directly after an analysis of the doctrine of transmigration.[3]

From Plutarch's discussion of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, it is evident that he had heard something about various interpretations but that it was no longer clear to him how all these elements should be combined and what their original meaning was. For our elucidation of Hesiod's riddle we could make almost no use of Plutarch's information, and were restricted to his remark that the life of a Nymph ends at the decline of the world.[4] We also pointed out there that the view that the term generation in the riddle must be understood as a period of 30 years, in agreement with Heraclitus, can be reconciled with the report that Heraclitus assumed a duration of 10,800 years for the Great Year.[5]

What has not yet been explained is why Cleombrotus argues in Plutarch that in the riddle the word "generation" must be seen as an indication of one year, and why others, according to Demetrius, held that it was a period of 30 or 108 years.[6] It must also be recalled here that at the same time Cleombrotus clearly thought that "generation" meant the entire length of a man's life, which is only explicitly stated for the period of 108 years.[7]

All these mutually conflicting points can be reconciled and then

[1] According to Olympiodorus, *In Arist. meteor.*, 382a, 6 (ed. G. Stüve, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, XII, 2, Berlin, 1900, 301), *cf.* Detienne, *La notion de DAÏMÔN*, 151-152.

[2] Porphyry, *De antro Nympharum*, 10 (ed. Nauck, 1886): Νύμφας δὲ ναΐδας λέγομεν καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑδάτων προεστώσας δυνάμεις ἰδίως, ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ τὰς εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσας ψυχὰς κοινῶς ἁπάσας.

[3] See p. 80.

[4] See p. 102.

[5] See p. 89-90.

[6] See p. 80-81.

[7] See p. 82.

explained if it is assumed that Hesiod's riddle played a part in the Classical speculations on the transmigration of the soul. It is our view that in this context "generation" was equated with "year" and that the resulting age of the raven (108 years) was understood as the duration of man's life on earth and that of the phoenix (972 years) as the duration of the soul's peregrination between the death of the individual and a new incarnation, which means that from birth to birth the soul passed through periods of 1080 years. To make this acceptable, we must base ourselves on several statements made by Plato about metempsychosis.

In the *Phaedrus* Plato speaks about the time required by the soul to regain its lost wings: this amounts to 10,000 years. Only the soul of the true philosopher or of him who with great devotion has initiated young people into philosophy can escape the cycle of births after 3,000 years if he has chosen a life of this kind three times in succession. All the other souls are judged after their first existence and receive either punishment under the earth or elevation to heaven according to how they lived their earthly lives. In the thousandth year they choose a new existence.[1] Under the thousand years is also understood earthly life, which Plato put at 100 years, since he speaks later on about the soul that must drift for 9,000 years under or around the earth, by which he must have meant the sum of the periods between the earthly existences.[2] A somewhat different view of the matter is found in the report of Er concerning the hereafter, occurring at the end of the *Politeia*, in which it is said that the unrighteous must pay a tenfold penalty for their earthly transgressions, the life of man being put at 100 years and the period under the earth at 1000 years.[3]

[1] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 248e-249b: εἰς μὲν γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ ὅθεν ἥκει ἡ ψυχὴ ἑκάστη οὐκ ἀφικνεῖται ἐτῶν μυρίων—οὐ γὰρ πτεροῦται πρὸ τοσούτου χρόνου—πλὴν ἡ τοῦ φιλοσοφήσαντος ἀδόλως ἢ παιδεραστήσαντος μετὰ φιλοσοφίας, αὗται δὲ τρίτῃ περιόδῳ τῇ χιλιετεῖ, ἐὰν ἕλωνται τρὶς ἐφεξῆς τὸν βίον τοῦτον, οὕτω πτερωθεῖσαι τρισχιλιοστῷ ἔτει ἀπέρχονται, αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι, ὅταν τὸν πρῶτον βίον τελευτήσωσιν κρίσεως ἔτυχον, ... τῷ δὲ χιλιοστῷ ἀμφότεραι ἀφικνούμεναι ἐπὶ κλήρωσίν τε καὶ αἵρεσιν τοῦ δευτέρου βίου αἱροῦνται, ὃν ἂν θέλῃ ἑκάστη.

[2] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 257a: ἐννέα χιλιάδας ἔτων περὶ γῆν κυλινδουμένην αὐτὴν καὶ ὑπὸ γῆς ἀνοῦν παρέξει. For the idea of metempsychosis in the *Phaedrus*, see R. S. Bluck, *The Phaedrus and reincarnation*, in *AJPh*, 79, 1958, 156-164 and *idem*, *Plato, Pindar, and metempsychosis*, in *AJPh*, 79, 1958, 412, n. 14.

[3] Plato, *Politeia*, 615a, b: εἶναι δὲ τὴν πορείαν χιλιέτη ... ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων δίκην

Plato undoubtedly derived his data from older sources. The 10,000 year period for the cycle of births is also found in Empedocles, at least if the three times ten thousand seasons he gives for this cycle is read as years with three seasons.[1] Plato's view that the philosopher is freed from the wheel of births after three "pure" periods of 1,000 years, is reminiscent of the well-known statement of Pindar that he who has been able to keep his soul free of unrighteousness three times on both sides of the grave goes to the stronghold of Cronus, the Isle of the Blessed.[2]

Thus, in the *Phaedrus* Plato put what we may call the great cycle of the soul at $10 \times (100 + 900) = 10{,}000$ years but in the *Politeia* at $10 \times (100 + 1{,}000) = 11{,}000$ years, at least if we may take it that there too it is assumed that the soul must pass through 10 lives. The impression is obtained that he knew that after the passage of 1,000 years an important point occurred in the cycle of the soul, but that it was not clear to him whether this period must be taken only as the time between two existences or as including the preceding earthly life. He seems to have attached importance only to the fact that the soul underwent a new reincarnation after 1,000 years and that it must undergo this fate ten times.

δεδωκέναι ἐν μέρει, ὑπὲρ ἑκάστου δεκάκις, τοῦτο δ' εἶναι κατὰ ἑκατονταετηρίδα ἑκάστην, ὡς βίου ὄντος τοσούτου τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου, ἵνα δεκαπλάσιον τὸ ἔκτεισμα τοῦ ἀδικήματος ἐκτίνοιεν.

[1] Empedocles, *frg.* 115 (see p. 132, n. 5). 10,000 years, e.g. in R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Meno*, Cambridge, 1961, 282-283 and W. K. C. Guthrie, *A history of Greek Philosophy*, II, Cambridge, 1965, 251, n. 6, where there are also other and older views. Herodotus, II, 123, gives a description of metempsychosis that resembles most closely that of Empedocles (*cf.* Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, 103, n. 39); Herodotus remarks that after 3,000 years the soul returns to the individual. It is tempting to think that as early an author as Herodotus interpreted, as do a number of modern scholars, the seasons of Empedocles as years and that his incarnation interval of 3,000 years originally referred to $3 \times 1{,}000$ seasons. On this basis, Empedocles and Plato would be in agreement, at least on the point of the periodization of the metempsychosis. However, the 3,000 years also played an important role as a great cycle: see the Orphic fragment 231 (Kern) in Proclus, given on p. 143, n. 3; there is also the 3,000 years assigned to the Great Year by Cicero, according to Servius (see above p. 73, n. 4).

[2] Pindar, *Olymp.*, II, 124-130: ὅσοι δ' ἐτόλμασαν ἐστρὶς / ἑκατέρωθι μείναντες ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν / ψυχάν, ἔτειλαν Διὸς ὁδὸν παρὰ Κρό- / νου τύρσιν. ἔνθα μακάρων / νᾶσον ὠκεανίδες / αὖραι περιπνέοισιν. For Pindar's conception of metempsychosis, see the literature referred to on p. 138, in n. 5.

Our hypothesis is that this version of metempsychosis was based on Hesiod, *frg*. 304, or that a connection was made between the two very early. This is given support by several arguments.

We have already pointed out that the 324,000 years of the Nymphs can be interpreted as 10,800 Heraclitean generations of 30 years, and that this reveals a relationship between the riddle of Hesiod and Censorinus' statement that Heraclitus put the duration of the Great Year at 10,800 years.[1] In this context we referred to the tradition that in Hesiod's riddle the word "generation" must be understood as an indication of a year. It may be assumed that Heraclitus himself had already spoken of a period of 10,800 generations and one of 10,800 years.

The question of the original import of Censorinus' 10,800 years is a matter of controversy: it has been seen as the great cycle of the soul, i.e. the cycle of births in metempsychosis,[2] and as the great cosmic cycle of the Great Year.[3] Arguments can be put forward in support of both views. We assume that Heraclitus, in expressing Hesiod's riddle in his generations of 30 years, put the total duration of life on earth at 10,800 generations and assumed for the great cycle of the soul a period of 10,800 years. The cycle of the individual soul would thus comprise the same number of years as the cycle of life had generations.

According to Hesiod, the Nymphs live ten times as long as the phoenix, whose life would then, according to the Heraclitean computation, comprise 1,080 generations or years. If the 10,800 years of Heraclitus indicate the great cycle of the soul, the phoenix with its 1,080 years must symbolize what we may call the small cycle: an earthly life and the subsequent peregrinations of the soul until it begins a new life on earth. According to Plato, as we know, the great cycle was formed by 10 small ones.

[1] See p. 89. The number 18,000 found in Aëtius remains obscure and is indeed probably based on a misunderstanding.

[2] Of the authors mentioned on p. 90 in n. 1, we may mention here: Reinhardt, *Parmenides*, 197-199; *idem, Heraclitea*, 81; Kirk, *Heraclitus*, 302; and with some hesitations also Marcovich, 302.

[3] Of the authors mentioned on p. 90 in n. 1, we may mention here: Vlastos, 311; Guthrie, *History*, I, 458; Van der Waerden, *Das grosse Jahr*, 136, 142.

If we now, with Plato, take the duration of this small cycle as 10 times longer than the life of a man, we obtain for an earthly life a period of 108 years and for the interval between two such lives 972 years. In this context the tradition that in Hesiod's riddle the word "generation" indicates a period of 108 years becomes logical. In this connection we would once again draw attention to the fact that Plutarch explicitly states that this period is the maximal lifespan of man.[1]

From the Heraclitean calculation of Hesiod's riddle it is possible to derive, by application of Plato's re-incarnation scheme, the above-mentioned periods of 108 and 972 years. But we find these numbers directly in the original version of Hesiod if there, too, we equate a generation with a year: the raven lives 108 and the phoenix 972 years. If the periodization of metempsychosis was also found in this version, the age of the phoenix here, in contrast to Heraclitus' version, must have been an indication of the peregrination of the soul between two successive existences. The 9,720 years of the Nymphs must then be taken as the total duration of these peregrinations within the great cycle of the soul. We have seen that Plato too knew the cumulative duration of this interim period and that he put it at a total of 9,000 years.[2]

If, in Classical times, Hesiod's riddle was indeed related to the doctrine of metempsychosis, it must be concluded from the foregoing that the phoenix was also seen in two ways as a symbol of the soul. On the basis of the original version of Hesiod, the bird was taken as an indication of the 972 years spent by the soul between two earthly lives; on the basis of the computation given by Heraclitus it was interpreted as a symbol of the soul as such, the soul that takes a new incarnation every 1,080 years.

It follows from this that uncertainty could arise concerning the correct interpretation to be given to the phoenix as symbol of the soul in Hesiod's riddle. Furthermore, it could be difficult to decide whether the phoenix-soul must be assigned a "lifespan" of 972 or 1,080 years. It seems logical to conclude that these difficulties were solved by assuming a round number for the phoenix (1,000 years)

[1] See p. 81.
[2] See p. 134, n. 2.

and that this interval was applied at times to the peregrinations of the soul after death and at other times to the entire period between two incarnations.

This would explain why Plato took a period of 1,000 years for the penance of the soul after death in the *Politeia* and in the *Phaedrus* included in this interval the earthly life of man (100 years).[1]

If the phoenix in Hesiod, *frg.* 304, was taken in this sense as a symbol of the soul, this would explain how the phoenix could be said to live 1,000 years. The fact that this age was first mentioned by Martial and Pliny,[2] need not mean that the conception was not much older, because sources for the phoenix dating from the time before Christ are extremely scarce.[3] We have attempted to show in the elucidation of Hesiod's riddle that the 500 years frequently mentioned for the phoenix represents a rounding off of the 540 years mentioned by Manilius, which is based on the sexagesimal version of the riddle.[4] We now postulate that the lifespan of 1,000 years, too, ultimately goes back to Hesiod, *frg.* 304, in particular to the interpretation given it on the basis of theory of metempsychosis.

That Hesiod's riddle was interpreted in this sense is also shown by the following points. In a much-discussed fragment of Pindar's *Threni* in Plato it is said that after the ninth year Persephone sends back up to earth the souls of those whose penance she accepts.[5] This

[1] See p. 143.
[2] See p. 69.
[3] See p. 393-396.
[4] See p. 89.
[5] Pindar, *frg.* 133 (ed. Schroeder and ed. Snell = *frg.* 137, ed. Turyn = Plato, *Meno*, 81b-c), 1-3: οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος / δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἅλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳ ἔτει / ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν. Recent literature on this passage and the connection between it and *Olymp.*, II, 124-130 (see p. 135, n. 2) and the views of Empedocles and Plato: K. von Fritz, 'Εστρὶς ἑκατέρωθι *in Pindar's second Olympian and Pythagoras' theory of metempsychosis*, in *Phronesis*, 2, 1957, 85-89; contra Von Fritz: R. S. Bluck, *Plato, Pindar and metempsychosis*, in *AJPh*, 79, 1958, 405-414; idem, *Plato's Meno*, Cambridge, 1961, 280-283 (for the translation "after the ninth year": p. 280); D. McGibbon, *Metempsychosis in Pindar*, in *Phronesis*, 9, 1964, 5-11; Guthrie, *History*, (see p. 135, n. 1), II, 252-253; J. van Leeuwen, *Pindarus' tweede Olympische Ode*, Thesis Leiden, Assen, 1964, 194-200. Older literature and a detailed discussion of the conceptions in Pindar are found in H. S. Long, *A study of the doctrine of metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato*, Thesis Princeton, Princeton, 1948, 29-44.

remarkably short interval has never been explained in a way that would reconcile this passage with other statements by Pindar himself or by Plato concerning metempsychosis. It has been pointed out, however, that the period of nine years can only be combined with Plato's views if it is assumed that the "ninth year" must be read as the "ninth millenium", although no case is known in which the term used by Pindar, ἔτος—in contrast to ἐνιαυτός—was used in the sense of "period".[1] But this old problem acquires a completely logical solution if we assume that Pindar knew the calculation of the cycles of the soul according to Hesiod's riddle. We have seen that there the age of the raven itself is again taken as a year of which the crow indicates a month and the deer a season of four months.[2] The lifespan of the phoenix encompasses nine such "years": if the raven symbolizes the earthly life of man and the phoenix the interval between two lives, it can indeed be said with Pindar that the soul returns to the earth after nine years.[3] This explanation puts the fragment into a logical relationship with other references to the fate of the soul.

In the fragment from the *Threni* it is also said that the souls released by Persephone after the ninth year become kings, mighty and

[1] Bluck, *Plato's Meno*, 281; McGibbon, 11; Guthrie, *History*, II, 253. O. Skutsch, *Notes on Metempsychosis*, in *Class. Philol.*, 54, 1959, 114, suggests that ἐνάτῳ ἔτει might in some way be related to an original ἐν νέα = εἰς νέα (*sc.* σώματα), a suggestion which explains nothing and is highly unlikely.

[2] See p. 95.

[3] The nine years have been taken as an *enneaëteris; cf.* e.g. E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 2nd ed., Freiburg i.B.-Leipzig-Tübingen, 1898 (reprint Darmstadt, 1961), II, 211, n. 2, who refers to Hesiod, *Theogonia*, 793-804, where it is said that the gods who swore a false oath were banished from Olympus for nine years. It seems more likely, however, that this originally referred to nine Great Years; *cf.* vs. 799: μέγαν εἰς ἐνιαυτόν (but see also M. C. West. *Hesiod, Theogony*, Oxford, 1966, 376, who concludes from this expression that an ordinary year is meant here). There is also the relevant view in Plutarch that the nine years of Apollo's banishment were really nine Great Years (see for this p. 84). Empedocles too clearly had in mind a much longer period for this kind of banishment (see p. 132, n. 5 and p. 135, n. 1). Conceivably, ancient Oriental ideas had contributed to the period of nine "years": as early as the Hurrian-Hittite Kumarbi myth, the gods took turns in being the king of heaven for nine years; *cf.* H. G. Güterbock, *Kumarbi. Mythen vom churritischen Kronos aus den hethitischen Fragmenten zusammengestelt, übersetzt und erklärt*, Zürich-New York, 1946, 6.

wise men, later to be considered by men as Heroes.[1] The latter implies that for them the peregrination of the soul has come to an end. We have already mentioned that elsewhere, in his second *Olympic Ode*, Pindar says that he who has kept his soul free of unrighteousness three times on both sides of the grave is released from the cycle of births—a privilege Plato extended to the philosopher.[2] Now that we know that in the *Threni* the nine years of the soul's penance can be taken as the much longer interval between two existences—972 years according to Hesiod's riddle—there is no objection to the assumption that they refer to the third cycle of the soul. It is therefore unnecessary to assume a difference between the ideas in this text and those in the second *Olympic Ode* and in Plato.[3] The assumption that Hesiod's riddle was interpreted as an indication of the cycles of the transmigration of the soul thus throws a clarifying light on an obscure passage in Pindar and on the whole of his ideas concerning metempsychosis.

Lastly, we must inquire into the groups among whom the assumed interpretation of Hesiod's riddle could have originated. It can be deduced from Plutarch that the 108 years for a generation of old people was seen as an Orphic concept.[4] The extent to which the

[1] Pindar, *frg.* 133 (137-see p. 138, n. 5), 3-6: ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοί / καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίᾳ τε μέγιστοι / ἄνδρες αὔξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥρωες ἄγ-/νοι πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

[2] See p. 135.

[3] For this assumed difference, see e.g. the articles (mentioned on p. 138 in n. 5) by von Fritz, 88-89 and Bluck, 407. Rohde, *Psyche*, II, 212, n. 2, pointed out that there did not necessarily have to be a difference.

[4] See p. 82. The 108-year period is perhaps also implied in the second redaction of Hesiod's riddle in Ausonius, *Opusc.*, XXXII, 1-9: in the manuscripts and printed editions the rather literal translation is introduced by the words (vs. 1 and 2): *Ter binos deciesque novem super exit in annos / iusta senescentum quos implet vita virorum*. W. H. Roscher, *Zu Ausonius De aetatibus animantium*, in *Philologus*, 67 (N.F. 21), 1908, 158-160, has suggested that instead of *ter binos* should be read *ter senos*, because a γενεά of 96 years is "*nicht nachweisbar und an sich unwahrscheinlich*" (see also his *Enneadische Studien*, (n. 3 on p. 77), 41, n. 65). After his citation of Hesiod's verses, Ausonius says that the period of the Nymphs concerns the duration of every living thing and that only God knows the length of the rotational periods of the planets, the sun, and the moon, which determine the duration of the Great Year (see Plato, here p. 73, n. 2). Ausonius' conception is therefore rather close to the explanation of the riddle we have given here.

early Orphics knew metempsychosis and what the relationship was in this respect between Orphism and Pythagorism is a matter of controversy.[1] What is certain is that in later times many things were ascribed to the Orphics of which we can now demonstrate only that they were known to the early Pythagoreans. This seems to include the number 108. Demetrius indicates in Plutarch that 108 years was the longest possible human lifespan, because the age of 54 is the outer limit for anyone to be in the middle of his life. He himself points out that the latter number is the sum of the great or double tetractys with which Plato also began the composition of the world soul in his *Timaeus*.[2] Plato is the first to mention this great tetractys, but he undoubtedly took it from Pythagorism.[3] We have seen that in the riddle the reading "generations of young people" is the original one because this is the only basis on which the duration of the current period can be properly calculated.[4] Furthermore, we

[1] A highly critical view of the age of many supposed Orphic doctrines is given by I. M. Linforth. *The arts of Orpheus*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1941 (*cf.* also U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, II, 3rd ed., Darmstadt, 1959, 195-202). Following Linforth, Long, (see p. 138, n. 5 here), 92, concludes, with respect to metempsychosis: "*it is unreasonable to believe that the Pythagoreans derived that doctrine from an Orphic source*". *Cf.* also E. R. Dodds, *The Greek and the irrational*, (Sather classical lectures, 25), Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1951, 143-144, 147-149 and W. Jaeger, *Die Theologie der frühen griechischen Denker*, Darmstadt, 1964 (reprint = Stuttgart, 1953), 71-78. For a more positive evaluation of the Orfics, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek religion*, 2nd ed., London, 1952, 156-171, K. Ziegler, *Orphische Dichtung*, in *RE*, 18, 2, 1942, 1370-1386, Nilsson, I, 691-696 and Th. G. Sinnige, *Matter and infinity in the presocratic schools and Plato*, Thesis Utrecht, Assen, 1968, 49-63.

[2] Plato, *Timaeus*, 35b-36b; for this, see p. 81. For a discussion of this passage, see A. Ahlvers, *Zahl und Klang bei Platon*, Thesis Bern, (Noctes Romanae, 6), Bern, 1952, 21-35 and B. Kytzler, *Die Weltseele und der musikalische Raum*, in *Hermes*, 87, 1959, 393-413.

[3] *Cf.* A. E. Taylor, *A commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Oxford, 1928, 137 and Ahlers, 32-34. K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*, 2nd ed., Frankfurt am Main, 1959, 189, pointed to the *Theologoumena arithmetica*, 40 (ed. V. de Falco, Leipzig, 1922, 52), where it is said of five Pythagoreans that they taught that after 216 years metempsychosis begins: after that many years Pythagoras would live again. However, the explanation given with this statement suggests a different relationship than that with the great tetractys: 216 ($= 6^3$) is the psychogonic cube of 6, which holds for the gestational period of a seven-month's child and, in parallel with this, for metempsychosis.

[4] See p. 97.

have made it probable that the generations mentioned in the riddle were interpreted as periods of 108 years, because the raven with its 108 generations, considered as years, was seen as a symbol of the earthly life of man. The variant "generations of old people" can therefore be seen as a deliberate change introduced into Hesiod's text by Pythagoreans or possibly Orphic-Pythagoreans in order to give a cautious indication that the riddle concerned metempsychosis.

A connection with Hesiod, *frg.* 304, has also been suspected in respect of an Orphic fragment in Plutarch, which refers to someone (?) "who lives as long as the leaf-bearing branches of the palms."[1] If these two texts are indeed related, the Orphic verse must be a rather laboured, deliberately obscure reference to Hesiod based on the homonymy φοῖνιξ-bird and φοῖνιξ-palm. Such an obscure way of speaking about the mystery of the soul seems highly appropriate for Orphic-Pythagoreans. Both meanings of the word φοῖνιξ led in Classical times to various kinds of confusion and deliberate speculation.[2] In this respect one text must be mentioned that also seems to have a connection with Hesiod's riddle.

We have seen that in the riddle the phoenix originally symbolizes the duration of a world month and that therefore 12 of these "phoenix periods" form a Great Year.[3] Horapollo, who attributed much mysterious wisdom to the early Egyptians, states that the Egyptians draw a palm tree to indicate a year because this tree gives off a new branch every month and consequently produces 12 in a year.[4] The agreement is so striking that it becomes highly prob-

[1] Plutarch, *Quaest. conviv.*, VIII, 4, 2 (723e-ed. Bernardakis, *Plut. Mor.*, IV, Lipsiae, 1892, 322): ὁ δὲ φοῖνιξ μακρόβιον μέν ἐστι ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα τῶν φυτῶν, ὥς που καὶ τὰ 'Ορφικὰ (= Kern (see p. 143, n. 3), no. 225) ταῦτα μεμαρτύρηκε· "ζῶον δ'ἴσον ἀκροκόμοισιν / φοινίκων ἔρνεσσιν". For Roscher, *Enneadische Studien*, 24, n. 35, 26, n. 42, followed by Schulz, *Rätsel*, (see p. 77, n. 3), I, 143, this text gave reason to read φοῖνιξ in Hesiod's riddle also as "palm": *cf.* also Türk, 3461, n. 1 and Hubaux and Leroy, 105. Rohde, *Psyche*, II, 121, n. 2 on 120, assumed that this fragment "*wohl aus einer Schilderung des langen Lebens ältester Menschengeschlechter stammt*".

[2] See p. 53-57.

[3] See p. 94-95.

[4] Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, I, 3: καὶ ἑτέρως ἐνιαυτὸν γράφοντες, φοίνικα ζωγραφοῦσι, διὰ τὸ δένδρον τοῦτο μόνον τῶν ἄλλων κατὰ τὴν ἀνατολὴν τῆς σελήνης μίαν βάϊν γεννᾷν, ὡς ἐν δώδεκα βάϊσιν ἐνιαυτὸν ἀπαρτίζεσθαι. A remarkable

able that among certain groups the phoenix in Hesiod was seen as a palm branch. This strengthens the view that there is a relationship between the Orphic fragment and Hesiod's riddle.[1] It is not clear, however, to what the fragment refers: it could be the peregrination of the soul after death or the entire small cycle of the soul including the earthly life, or even the Great Year.

That the Orphic-Pythagoreans related Hesiod's riddle to metempsychosis also seems to be suggested by the citation in Aristophanes. We have pointed out that the reference forms the climax of the preceding passage, and it was evidently intended to make the audience laugh. The question is: Why? It has been argued that in several places the *Birds* derides some Orphic ideas,[2] and it is quite possible that this is also the case for the citation of the evidently widely known verse about the crow. The nine generations of the crow comprise 300 years, and according to Proclus, "Orpheus" taught that the soul remains in the penitential places under the earth not for the 1,000 years of Plato but for 300 years, in which period its life is oriented toward birth.[3] There may be also some connection with the

parallel is found in the Coptic *Life of Apa Onnophrius*, published and translated by E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic martyrdoms in the dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1914, 208 and 214 (trans. on 458 and 463, respectively), where it is said both of the hermit Timotheus and of Onnophrius that in the desert they fed on the fruits of a palm tree that annually bore 12 bunches of dates, each sufficient for one month.

[1] Roscher, *Enneadische Studien*, 26-27, assumed that the riddle must have originated in "Orphic-Hesiodic" circles, for the following reasons: 1. the number nine played a role in Orphism; 2. the long-living "palm" also occurs in the Orphic literature (see p. 142, n. 1); 3. the long life of the animals, the palm, and the Nymphs is reminiscent of the Great Year, which is supposed to be first encountered in Orphic writings; and 4. the legend in which Orpheus had a lifespan equal to nine generations (see below, p. 144, n. 1), derives from Orphic circles.

[2] *Cf.* J. Bidez, *Eos ou Platon et l'Orient*, (Gifford lectures, 1939), Brussels, 1945, 40, 168, n. 12, R. Turcan, *L'âme-oiseau et l'eschatologie orphique*, in *RHR*, 78, (155), 1959, 40, and Jaeger, *Theologie der frühen griechischen Denker*, 78.

[3] Proclus, *Comm. in Plat. Rem publ.*, ed. W. Kroll, II, Leipzig, 1901, 173: Ὁ δὲ Ὀρφεὺς διὰ τριακοσίων αὐτὰς (*sc.* ψυχὰς) ἐτῶν ἀπὸ τῶν τόπων ἄγει τῶν ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ δικαιωτηρίων αὖθις εἰς γένεσιν, σύνθημα καὶ οὗτος ποιούμενος τὰς τρεῖς ἑκατοντάδας τῆς τελείας περιόδου τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν καθαιρομένων, ἐφ' οἷς ἐβίωσαν ἐπιστρεφόμεναι τὴν γένεσιν (= O. Kern, *Orphicorum fragmenta*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1963, 245, no. 231). The 300 years suggest a great cycle of 3,000 years, see p. 135, n. 1.

idea transmitted by Suidas that Orpheus lived for nine generations, which again is reminiscent of Hesiod's riddle.[1] One wonders whether Aristophanes did not have in mind a different, perhaps more Orphic concept of metempsychosis that was also related to Hesiod's riddle but followed another line than the possibly more Pythagorean view that put the term of the peregrination of the soul after death at 972 (1,000) years. It is indeed remarkable that he cited a sexagesimal version of the verse about the crow. The *Birds* was written in 414 B.C.,[2] i.e. in the time when Babylonian influence was increasing in Greece after the Persian wars.[3] It is conceivable that at this time the riddle again became known in its original sexagesimal version.

In view of all this we think that there is sufficient reason to conclude that the verses of Hesiod, which originally only represented a computation of the duration of life in the current world period, were later thought to contain an indication of the cycles of metempsychosis. In Hesiod's version the raven with its 108 generations was interpreted as an indication of the earthly life of man (108 years), the phoenix as a symbol of the peregrinations of the soul after death (972 years), and the Nymphs as a symbol of the totality of perigrinations within the great cycle of the soul (9720 years). The small cycle, the period between two successive incarnations, was thus put at 1,080 years and the great cycle at 10,800 years.

The periods of 1,080 and 10,800 years can be derived directly from the riddle if the age of the phoenix and of the Nymphs is expressed in Heraclitean generations of 30 years and these too are equated with one year. In Heraclitus' adaptation the phoenix is therefore a symbol of the small and the Nymphs of the great cycle of the soul. This could have attracted Heraclitus because this approach revealed several parallels between the cycles of the soul and those of the

[1] Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. Ὀρφεύς (ed. A. Adler, III, Leipzig, 1933, 564): ... βιῶναι δὲ γενεὰς θ', οἱ δὲ ια' φασιν. The same holds for the seer Teresias, according to some scholiasts, e.g. Tzetzes, on Lycophoron, *Alexandra*, 682 (ed. E. Scheer, *Lycophroni Alexandra*, II, Berlin, 1958 (reprint = 1908), 225), *cf.* Roscher, *Enneadische Studien*, 26, 41.

[2] *Cf.* e.g. H. van Daele in the Budé edition of V. Couton and H. van Daele, *Aristophane*, III, 6th ed., Paris, 1963, 11.

[3] *Cf.* Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, 293-296.

world. According to him, the ratio between a year and a generation is the same as that between a day and a month, and this ratio also holds for the small cycle of the soul and a month of the current world year as well as the great cycle of the soul and the period of life on earth (1 : 30).

It hardly seems likely that Heraclitus was the first to see an indication of the periodic divisions of metempsychosis in Hesiod's riddle. One obtains the impression that it was Hesiod's version itself that was responsible for this interpretation, because only in it does the basic number 108 occur; the 108 generations of the raven supply the smallest unit (1 *sar*) in which the world period is expressed, and in parallelism with this the 108 years of the raven form the starting point for the calculation of the cycle of the soul. Pindar's nine years for the interval between two lives also suggest that Hesiod's version gave the impetus to speculation about the duration of the soul's transmigration, as does the fact that in the later symbolism the phoenix was the paramount symbol of the fate of the soul after death. Further evidence is supplied by the fact that the total duration of the peregrinations of the soul, which is exemplified by the Nymphs, still occurs in Plato as a well-known concept (9,000 years). There are various indications that this interpretation of Hesiod, *frg.* 304, originated among the Pythagoreans.

The objection might be offered that the foregoing conclusions are based on rather hypothetical grounds. The answer to this objection is that they make it possible to give a satisfactory explanation of the divergent interpretations which, as appears from Plutarch, were given to the word "generation" in Hesiod, *frg.* 304: 1, 30, and 108 years. In addition, the foregoing has made it clear how a lifespan of 1,000 years came to be given to the phoenix as symbol of the soul. The latter, indeed, could have been arrived at quite apart from any interpretation of Hesiod's riddle, on the basis of periods assigned to metempsychosis.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF THE PHOENIX

1. The Two Principal Versions of the Myth

The essence of the phoenix myth is that by dying the bird renews its life. Although the many references to the myth in the Classical and Early Christian literature differ at various points, almost all of them can be reduced to one of two versions. In both these versions, when the old phoenix feels its death approaching it begins to collect aromatics.[1]

According to the less common of these two traditions, the bird dies on the nest it has built of aromatic plants, after which it decomposes. From its decaying remains the new phoenix is generated, usually starting as a worm. The young bird then departs without delay for Heliopolis, in Egypt, carrying with it the remains of its predecessor, which it places on the altar of the god of the sun. The link between the phoenix and Egypt thus established was given the main emphasis by Herodotus, who makes no reference, however, to the bird's origin.[2]

According to the other and more wide-spread tradition, the old phoenix burns with the collected aromatics, which are usually ignited by the heat of the sun; from its ashes the new phoenix arises. The intermediate stage of the worm is often inserted in this version too, although it has little point because the flesh of the old phoenix does not pass through a period of decomposition.[3] It therefore seems very likely that the worm was borrowed from the other version. Many authors have the phoenix go from its native country to the Egyptian Heliopolis and burn itself on the altar there. It is possible that this

[1] See Chapter VI, 2.

[2] For a discussion of the tradition followed by Herodotus, see p. 190-193.

[3] Epiphanius sensed the illogicality of the worm arising from the ashes and therefore assumed that it emerged after some time from bits of intact flesh that remained untouched by the fire; see p. 212. In the Graeco-Roman world it was known that organisms originate in a decaying body; see p. 187.

too did not belong to the original version but was added to re-affirm the link between the phoenix and Heliopolis.

This idea is inescapable when one studies the texts in which India is said to be the country of the phoenix. All the authors concerned hold to the tradition in which the phoenix burns; most of them have this take place in India itself, and therefore were seemingly unaware of the flight to Heliopolis and the resulting link between the phoenix and Egypt; none of them, furthermore, mentions the intermediate stage of the worm.[1] Before we draw any conclusions from this, we must give some attention to the authors who do have the phoenix journey from India to Egypt. We may start most conveniently with Philostratus.

In Philostratus the mention of the phoenix is made by Apollonius of Tyana. His entire report gives the impression of being an attempt to reconcile the forms of the myth concerning India and Egypt, since he distinguishes between "Egyptian" and "Indian" concepts of the phoenix. He calls the bird's journey to Egypt a special elaboration of the Egyptians, but immediately adds that the Indians agree with them.[2] He assumes on the one hand that the phoenix burns itself,[3] but on the other, in mentioning the bird's death, he uses a rather vague word suggesting decomposition more than cremation.[4] It remains possible that here the otherwise extremely unreliable Phi-

[1] Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32; Sidonius, *Carmina*, VII, 353-354, XI, 326-327; John Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11 (but see p. 148); *Schol.* on Persius, I, 46. The authors who give the Far East more in general as the abode of the phoenix can also be included here: Claudian, *Phoenix*, 1-10, *De consulatu Stilichonis*, II, 414-420, who after all ends by having the phoenix go to Heliopolis (see p. 158 and also p. 225) and the *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, nos. 1-4. Aristides, XVII, 2, XX, 19, XLV, 107 and Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*, 27, *Navigium*, 44, mention India as the abode of the phoenix and also the fire version, but are too brief to offer any indication of whether they were aware of the bird's flight to Egypt and the burning there.

[2] Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii Tyanaei*, III, 49: ἃ δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ᾄδουσιν, ὡς ἐς Αἴγυπτον φέρεται, καὶ Ἰνδοὶ ξυμμαρτυροῦσι.

[3] This is evident from ἐκδιδόμενον τῶν ἀκτίνων and his rendition of the "Indian" conception that at its death the phoenix sings funeral hymns, which lies in the direction of the prayer to the sun to ignite the pyre; see p. 201.

[4] *Ibid.*: τὸν φοίνικα τὸν ἐν τῇ καλιᾷ τηκόμενον, *cf.* Liddell-Scott, 1786-1787, *s.v.*, τήκω and p. 203.

lostratus[1] drew on information about the phoenix provided by Apollonius himself, and this is made probable by a remark of John Lydus, who after describing the burning of the phoenix in India says: "According to Apollonius, it does this on the altar in Heliopolis".[2] This city is not mentioned by Philostratus, and Lydus furthermore adds another detail about the departure of the phoenix from Egypt[3] that also cannot be found in Philostratus, so it may be considered certain that Lydus did not draw on Philostratus. If we may assume that the Apollonius he mentions is identical with Philostratus' hero, it is clear that Apollonius of Tyana must have written on the phoenix. This Neo-Pythagorean sage and wonder-worker lived in the first century after Christ, whereas Lydus lived in the sixth century.[4] In the latter's time the burning in Egypt was widely known, albeit that—with the exception of the *Physiologus*—the phoenix was never said to come from India. Lydus noticed that Apollonius had the bird live in India but assumed nonetheless that it burned itself in Heliopolis. It is therefore evident that Lydus found this to be a strange combination. Apollonius is possibly one of the first to have attempted to reconcile the "Indian" and "Egyptian" conceptions, as is also suggested by Philostratus' account.

The combination of India and Heliopolis also occurs in the *Physiologus*, although there the phoenix goes first to Lebanon on its way from India, to collect the aromatics for its pyre, and only then proceeds to Heliopolis.[5] In the later versions of this book the importance of India as the dwelling-place of the phoenix steadily decreases until it is no longer mentioned, whereas the flight to Egypt remains a constant element.[6] But the *Arabic Physiologus*, to the contrary, omits the burning in Heliopolis altogether: the phoenix does go from India to the Lebanon, but then returns to its departure point

[1] See F. Solmsen, *Philostratos, 10*, in *RE*, 20, 1, 1941, 147-154 on the sources of Philostratus.

[2] Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11: πράττεται δὲ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐν 'Ηλίου πόλει βωμοῦ κατὰ τὸν 'Απολλώνιον.

[3] See p. 224.

[4] See J. Miller, *Apollonius, 98*, in *RE*, 2, 1, 1895, 146-148 and A. Klotz, *Lydos, 7*, in *RE*, 13, 2, 1927, 2210-2217.

[5] *Gr. Physiologus*, 7; see also p. 171.

[6] For the disappearance of India from the later versions, see p. 307.

to burn itself.[1] These variations in the later versions of the *Physiologus* can be adequately explained by assuming that at the time it was quite clear that the tradition according to which the phoenix lived in India did not really admit the burning in Egypt; consequently, either India was omitted or the flight to Heliopolis.

Analysis of the texts indicating India as the dwelling-place of the phoenix leads to the conclusion that there was a separate tradition according to which the phoenix lived in India and renewed itself there by burning when its lifespan had been fulfilled. At the same time there was the other tradition that the young phoenix develops from the disintegrating body of its predecessor, which it takes to Heliopolis in Egypt. In this version no mention is made of India; the abode of the phoenix is usually placed in Arabia and sometimes in Ethiopia or Assyria.[2] But even in this version the flight to Egypt does not always seem to have been felt necessary, since according to Pliny, Manilius thought that the young phoenix brought its dead predecessor to the temple of the sun in the vicinity of Panchaia.[3]

The many variations of the version with the burning can be explained without difficulty if we start with the attractive hypothesis that the oldest and purest form of this version is the one just mentioned, according to which the bird lives in India and is consumed by fire there, having no connection with Egypt in any respect. The differences between the texts reporting the burning can then be interpreted as borrowings from the version in which the genesis takes place from the decomposing remains of the old phoenix, which were

[1] *Arab. Physiologus*, 6; see also p. 177-178.

[2] Arabia: Manilius in Pliny, X, 4 (but who has the young phoenix go to Panchaia); *I. Clement*, 25; Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28; Mela, III, 84; Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, II, 59, *Exameron*, V, 23, 79 (phoenix does not fly to Egypt, see p. 306). To Egypt, but without genesis details: Herodotus, II, 73; Celsus in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 98; Aelian, VI, 58 (for these and the following text see p. 190-194). Ethiopia: Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 4, also without details of the genesis. Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 393, has the phoenix live in Egypt but die in Ethiopia, which must be based on a misunderstanding, see p. 306; for Cyril of Jerusalem, who has the phoenix go to Egypt before its death, see below p. 158 and p. 194. The death of the phoenix in Assyria is a secondary tradition; see p. 51-52.

[3] Pliny, X, 4: *et totum deferre nidum prope Panchaiam in Solis urbem et in ara ibi deponere.*

interpolated in order to express the traditional link between the phoenix and Egypt in the former version. Because there would be little point in having the young phoenix bring the ashes of its predecessor to Egypt,[1] the journey to Heliopolis was given another content in the version of the burning: it was no longer the *first* flight of the *young* phoenix respectfully honouring its father but rather the *last* flight of the *old* phoenix journeying to the place of its resurrection. We have already mentioned the views of Apollonius in Philostratus and Lydus, and of the *Physiologus*: they all retain India as the abode of the phoenix, the last-mentioned even adding the intermediate stage of the worm. No other author who situates the burning in Egypt says that the bird comes from India; some do not mention a place of origin,[2] others give Arabia, the country from which it had long been assumed to depart for Egypt.[3]

Many authors only allude to the rebirth of the phoenix or limit themselves to the elements of the myth relevant to their argumentation. This often makes it difficult to determine which version they had in mind. For example, various authors mention the flight of the phoenix to Egypt without indicating whether they were referring to the first flight of the young phoenix or the last flight of its parent.[4]

We have seen in the foregoing that John Lydus drew attention to the various traditions within the version of the death by fire. Only a few writers show that they knew both versions of the myth, the

[1] But see Lactantius and Claudian on p. 157-158.

[2] Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, IV, 47; *Didascalia*, 40; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, IV, 72; Ishô'dâdh, *Comm. in Jobum*, ad 40, 20; Syriac *Nat. Hist.*, 42.

[3] *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15; Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 3; Copt. *I Clement*, 25; Michael Glycas, *Ann.*, I, (*PG* 158, 108C); Alanus in Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, XII, 14. Solinus, 33, 12, following Pliny, has the phoenix go to the temple of the sun near Panchaia to burn itself.

[4] E.g. Aurelius Victor, *De caesaribus*, IV, 14, Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de caesaribus*, IV, 9; Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, VI, 3; Chaeremon, *frg.* 3, in Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 397-398. Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22, says the bird lives in Arabia but not where it is consumed by fire. In the Coptic *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, 170, 13 (ed. Böhlig-Labib, 95) it is said of the third phoenix (see p. 367) that it is "consumed". The same word is used in the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* (see p. 46, l. 25) for the death by fire. It is therefore possible that in the Gnostic work, too, the fire version is implied, which is not made less likely by the worm mentioned a little further on; see also Böhlig's commentary, 94.

first of these being Pliny, in whose *Historia Naturalis* the phoenix is mentioned several times. In his most detailed report, for which he drew mainly on Manilius the Senator, Pliny puts the age of the phoenix at 540 years and says that the young bird arose from the decaying body of the old one. But further on it becomes clear that he also knew another story of the phoenix, since he makes fun of the medicines supposedly made from the ashes and the nest of the phoenix, whose lifespan is then put at 1,000 years.[1] It is possible, however, that this was intended to mean the ashes of the old phoenix that had died naturally before it was burned.

The first author known to have pointed out explicitly the difference between the two principal versions of the myth is Artemidorus. In his *Onirocritica*, Artemidorus speaks of a man who dreamed that he was painting a phoenix. This dream had been reported to him by an Egyptian, who interpreted it on the basis of what had later happened to the dreamer: he had become so poor that he had had to take his dead father on his shoulder and bear him to his grave. This was what the dream had predicted, "since the phoenix too buries its dead father", which is unequivocally a reference to the flight of the young phoenix to Egypt with the remains of its predecessor. Artemidorus makes no reference to the genesis of the young phoenix here, since it is irrelevant in this context. He is uncertain about whether this sad event was indeed the realization of the dream, but he deems it probable on the basis of the parallel. He is not entirely certain, however, because—as he says—there is another version of the phoenix myth in circulation: some say that the phoenix does not bury its father at all, that it does not even have a father or an ancestor at all but goes to Egypt when its end approaches and there burns itself on a pyre it has constructed of cinnamon and myrrh. They also claim that after some time a worm appears from the ashes, develops into a new phoenix, and flies back to the original dwelling-place. It could therefore, says Artemidorus, be said equally well, on the basis of this version, that the man who dreamed of the phoenix no longer had any parents.[2]

[1] Pliny, X, 4 and XXIX, 29, respectively.

[2] Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, IV, 47. For an explanation of the entire passage of Artemidorus, see also Hubaux and Leroy, 160-162.

Ambrose of Milan also mentioned the two traditions of the death of the phoenix together. In a sermon delivered on the occasion of the death of his brother Satyrus (A.D. 378) he cites, in connection with the final resurrection, the example of the phoenix: this bird makes itself a fragrant nest and dies, and from its decaying body there emerges a worm that becomes the new phoenix. After drawing a number of applications of this story for believers, he adds briefly that "very many" are of the opinion that this bird ignites its own pyre and is reborn from its ashes.[1]

Concerning the Jewish bird *ḥôl* there were also two different traditions corresponding to the two Classical versions of the death and resurrection of the phoenix. The Midrash on Genesis, *Bereshit Rabbah,* which draw sattention to this point, mentions that there were two different schools of thought on this question. According to the school of Rabbi Jannai, when a period of 1,000 years has passed a flame shoots out of the nest of the *ḥôl* and consumes the bird except for a remnant as large as an egg, which acquires limbs and lives on. But Rabbi Judan, the son of Rabbi Simeon, said that after 1,000 years the body of the *ḥôl* begins to decompose and that its wings fall off; he too believed that an egg-sized remnant gave rise to the new bird.[2] The influence of the various Classical versions of the phoenix story are unmistakable here.

It even occurs that both of the principal version are mentioned in different editions of one and the same text. This is the case in the phoenix passage in the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, i.e. *1 Clement*, Ch.25. This letter was written in the last years of the first century after Christ, at the direction of the Church of Rome, to the Christians in Corinth. Six manuscripts are known: two Greek texts, and one Latin, one Syriac, and two Coptic translations.[3] The surviving Greek texts and the Latin and Syriac translations have the version of the genesis of the young phoenix from the decomposing body of the old phoenix. But in the two Coptic

[1] Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, II, 59: *Plerique etiam opinantur, quod avis haec rogum sibi ipsa succendat et rursus de favillis suis et cineribus revivescat.*

[2] *Bereshit Rabbah*, XIX, trans. H. Freedman, London, 1951, 151-152; Jannai and Judan flourished *ca.* 225 and 320 (or 240?) A.D., respectively.

[3] *Cf.* J. Quasten, *Patrology*, I, Utrecht-Antwerp-Westminster, 1950, 51.

translations this reading is replaced by the fire motif.[1] The two Coptic texts are mutually independent, also with respect to the phoenix passage,[2] so that the reading they give must derive directly from the Greek text used for translation.[3] The reading of this lost text cannot claim originality: it is quite clear from the Coptic translations that the burning of the phoenix was inserted later in a forced and rather awkward way.

The available Geek texts and the Coptic translations run initially in parallel: they all recount how the phoenix builds itself a nest of incense, myrrh, and other fragrant materials; when its time is fulfilled it settles into this nest. What happens next in the Greek texts is what would logically be expected, i.e. the bird dies in that nest and a worm emerges from its decaying flesh to grow into the new phoenix, which takes the nest containing the bones of its predecessor from Arabia to Heliopolis in Egypt, places its burden on the altar of the sun, and flies back to the country in which it dwells. The Coptic versions also place the bird on the nest but then unexpectedly say that it carries its nest to Egypt and places it on the altar of the sun, and this in almost the same wording as that used by the Greek texts for the flight of the young phoenix to Egypt. This is followed by an insertion saying that the phoenix beats its wings and is consumed by fire, after which the genesis of the young bird is told in the same words as in the Greek texts; the conclusion is also the same. It is clear that the Coptic translations of *1 Clement* follow a Greek text in which the character of the phoenix story was completely changed by a transposition and some insertions.

All the commentators on this passage in the Coptic version of

[1] C. Schmidt, *Der erste Clemensbrief in altkoptischer Übersetzung*, (*TU*, XXXII, 1), Leipzig, 1908, 73-74. Translation of this text by O. von Lemm, *Koptische Miscellen, XCIII: Zum koptischen Physiologus, 3*, in *Bull. de l'Acad. Imp. des sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, VIe Série, 4, 1910, 1465-1467. F. Rösch, *Bruchstücke des ersten Clemensbriefes nach dem achmimischen Papyrus der strassburger Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, mit biblischen Texten derselben Handschrift*, Strassburg, 1910, 85-88 (with trans.).

[2] Schmidt, 14-16, Rösch, XX-XXVI (but see p. 154, n. 2).

[3] Schmidt, 16, Von Lemm, 1467; Rösch assumes that the two translations are mutually independent (*cf.* his final conclusion on p. XXVI), but is nevertheless of the opinion that the alteration should not have been present in the Greek archetype; for his rather confused argumentation, see p. 154, n. 2.

I Clement are of the opinion that the Greek archetype must have originated in Egypt, because they consider the fire motif to be typically Egyptian. Schmidt [1] does not go into this point any further, but von Lemm and Rösch believe they can even indicate the source on which the redactor drew. Without citing any other Classical or Early Christian text on the phoenix, they state that the data in the Coptic *I Clement* derive from the *Physiologus*.[2] It is evident, however, that their conclusions are undemonstrable and at least in part highly improbable.

There is nothing in the sources to suggest that the fire version had an Egyptian origin. We have seen that there was even a form of this version in which the phoenix was not linked to Egypt in any way.[3] Even if our hypothesis that this is the oldest form of the fire version should prove to be incorrect, the very occurrence of such a form constitutes clear evidence that the fire motif cannot be considered typically Egyptian. Furthermore, as early as the first century A.D. the fire version was already so well known in the Latin-speaking world that various authors found a simple allusion to it sufficient.[4] Therefore, when the Coptic translations of *I Clement* have the phoenix rise from its ashes this does not necessarily mean that the Greek text on which this was based could only have originated in

[1] Schmidt, 16: the "*Umgestaltung*" was on the one hand in the Greek text, "*andererseits muss sie auf dem Boden Ägyptens entstanden sein, wo man eine zweite Version des Mythus kannte*".

[2] Von Lemm, 1467. Rösch, XXVI, adds a rather unclear line of reasoning: "*Diese Version deckt sich im grossen und ganzen mit der des griechischen Physiologus, den aber die griechische Vorlage des Kopten sicher nicht gekannt hat, da sonst der koptische Übersetzer diesen für eine Symbolisierung geeigneteren Text als geschlossenes Ganzen in seinen Text aufgenommen hätte*" (here Rösch was probably influenced by the related treatment of *I Clement*, 25 by F. Lauchert, *Geschichte des Physiologus*, Strassburg, 1899, 12, which is comprehensible but equally incorrect). Rösch refers in addition to the existence of the Coptic *Physiologus*, and concludes: "*M.E. ist die koptische Überlieferung... von einer uns noch unbekannten Version beeinflusst, wenn nicht etwa die ganze Erzählung bei K sich als abhängig von einem koptischen Physiologus erweisen wird*". Following von Lemm and Rösch, A. van Lantschoot, *A propos du Physiologus*, in *Coptic studies in honor of Walter Ewing Crum*, (= *Bull. Byzant. Instit.*, II), Boston, 1950, 355-356 has printed the Coptic *I Clement* as a *Physiologus* text.

[3] See above, p. 147-149.

[4] See below, p. 409-410.

Egypt, although in itself that of course remains possible. Moreover, nothing in the Coptic translations points to an influence of the *Physiologus*. Their divergent readings derive from a simple transposition of a few sentences and the addition that the phoenix beats its wings and is consumed by fire. This last is found in many authors and is hardly typical for the *Physiologus*: it only occurs in some versions of it.[1] What is characteristic for this book is the development of the worm into the phoenix in three days,[2] but this is not to be found in the Coptic *1 Clement* although it could easily have been included. All that can be concluded from the Coptic translations is that one or more Greek manuscripts of *1 Clement* were in circulation in Egypt in which the report on the phoenix had been modified in the sense indicated above.

In Egypt, Clement's letter was one of the most widely read Early Christian documents, and it even enjoyed canonical respect there: in the well-known *Codex Alexandrinus*, which dates from the fifth century and was probably written in Egypt, the letter is included after the Apocalypse among the New Testament writings.[3] One of the two surviving Greek texts therefore derives from this codex. This means that the original version must also have been known in Egypt. Nonetheless, two Coptic translators, independently of each other, chose to use a manuscript with the modified text. It may certainly be concluded from this that the conception that the phoenix burned itself in Egypt was more attractive to them. This is quite understandable for Egyptians, since in the version they followed the position of Egypt is much more important than in the original story: Heliopolis is not only the burial-place of the old phoenix but also the birthplace of the young one. Similar examples of this type of chauvin-

[1] See p. 204-205.
[2] See p. 214-215.
[3] See E. Nestle, *Einführung in das griechischen Neue Testament*, 3rd ed., Göttingen, 1909, 66. For the use of *1 Clement* in the devine services up to the time of Eusebius, *cf.* Quasten, I, 50. In the *Can. Apostol.*, 85 (Egypt, or Syria, fourth century; see Quasten I, 37, but *cf.* B. Altaner-A. Stuiber, *Patrologie*, 7th ed., Freiburg-Bazal-Vienna, 1966, 256) *1 Clement* is also mentioned among the canonical writings; the Syriac translation of *1 Clement* is also included in the N.T.; A. Stuiber, *Clemens Romanus, I*, in *RAC*, 3, 1957, 190, thinks that *1 Clement* is only considered canonical in the two last-mentioned texts.

ism are found in both the Graeco-Egyptian and the Coptic literature. The major motif of the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, for instance, is to demonstrate the Egyptian descent of the great conqueror of the world.[1] In the Coptic literature a remarkable instance of this kind of nationalistic annexation occurs in the *Sermon on Mary*, in which the passage on the phoenix is also found: the anonymous preacher relates the mention of Rachel in the story of the slaying of the children in Bethlehem (*Matt.* ii.18) not to the wife of Jacob but to another Rachel, the wife of Eleazar the Levite, who during the Israelites' slavery in Egypt was so badly beaten by the taskmasters of the brickmakers that she gave birth to a dead child before her time.[2] This story must have been introduced into the sermon because the writer knew that it would appeal to his Egyptian audience more than the tale of the Biblical Rachel. Similar considerations must have led the Coptic translators of *I Clement* to give preference to a text with the divergent reading. It would be incorrect to assume, however, that this would also hold for the man who modified the original Greek text, which would place him in Egypt, because it is evident from Solinus that similar radical changes in an existing text were also made outside Egypt.

The relationship between Pliny and Solinus resembles that between the original Greek *I Clement* and the text underlying the Coptic translations. Solinus drew most of his report on the phoenix from Pliny, who in turn depended largely on Manilius.[3] But whereas Pliny described in detail how the old phoenix died on a nest made of wild cinnamon *(casia)* and how the young bird developed from the worm, carried the remains in the nest to the city of the sun near Panchaia, and placed it on the altar there, Solinus said that the phoenix placed on that altar a pyre it had made of *cinnamum*; he does not mention the burning and the resurrection, but it is clear

[1] See W. Kroll, *Kallisthenes*, in *RE*, 10, 2, 1919, 1709, 1718.

[2] John Rylands Library, Copt. Ms. 36 (72), 358-359, reproduced in F. Robinson, *Coptic apocryphal Gospels*, (*TS*, IV, 2) Cambridge, 1896, XXIII. The legend of Rachel derives from a Jewish source: see Ginzberg, II, 372, V, 437, n. 234.

[3] Pliny, X, 4 and Solinus, 33, 12.

that he implied both.[1] The only point of agreement with Pliny is the location of the city of the sun, a location which goes back to Manilius and is not found anywhere else. Solinus must therefore have known the Pliny-Manilius version but nevertheless replaced it by a brief reference to the burning. We have already seen that Solinus modified his source material for the duration of the Great Year to make it consistent with the opposite opinion of the majority of the authors,[2] and he undoubtedly did the same in this case: in his time the fire version was more widely known than that of the genesis from the body of the old phoenix, so he ignored Pliny to join the majority.

Thus, in Classical times there were two entirely different versions of the phoenix myth. We have seen that Pliny mentions both of these versions but separately and in different contexts, and that Artemidorus, Ambrose, and the compilers of *Bereshit Rabbah* all explicitly mentioned the difference between them; furthermore, in the Coptic *1 Clement* and in Solinus there must have been a replacement of one by the other.

An unmistakable attempt to combine the two main versions into a coherent whole is to be found in *De ave phoenice* of Lactantius. This author says that before its death the phoenix goes to Syria, where it comes to its end on a palm tree. It does not burn itself on its nest of fragrant herbs but dies a natural death, and only then is its body consumed by fire. This account clearly connects the two versions of the bird's death.[3] When the young phoenix has reached adulthood, it goes to Egypt to bring its father's remains to Heliopolis; this part of the story clearly belongs to the version of the decomposing body, and has little point here.[4] In other respects, too, Lactantius managed to mention almost all the current traditions concerning the phoenix.[5] *De ave phoenice* is the most detailed and

[1] It is striking that he has replaced the aromatics *casia* and *tus* by *cinnamum*, which is repeatedly mentioned for the burning: see p. 164-169.

[2] See p. 75.

[3] Vss. 77-98, see p. 209-210.

[4] Vss. 115-124, see p. 224.

[5] Vss. 1-30 (abode, see p. 311ff.), vss. 31-58 (sun bird, see p. 281ff.), vss. 59-76, (the names *Phoenices* and *phoenix*, "palm", see p. 52), vss. 125-150 (external appearance, see p. 252ff.), vss. 151-152 (admiration of collected Egyptians, see p. 225), vss. 153-154 (recording of appearance by priests, see p. 227),

longest report on the phoenix that has come down to us from Classical times, but just because it is a compilation it would be wrong to consider all the information in it as an exact rendering of the Classical ideas about the bird of the sun.[1] What Lactantius has to say can only be evaluated by constant comparison with the reports of other Classical and Early Christian writers who dealt with the phoenix. On various points it seems justified to conclude that Lactantius drew on older sources.[2] This would explain the various points of agreement with Claudian, who is often assumed to depend on Lactantius.[3] As far as the core of the myth is concerned, points of agreement are extremely scarce: Claudian says that the phoenix lives far away in the East and is consumed by fire there. He does not mention the worm, but he does have the young phoenix bring the remains of the old phoenix to Heliopolis to be burned again.[4] This insertion of the journey to Egypt, which also occurs in Lactantius, is the only adjustment to the other major version to be found in Claudian's poem.

A combination of the two traditions is also to be found in Cyril of Jerusalem, who follows the version of the genesis from the decaying body of the old phoenix but has this occur in Egypt, for which purpose he borrowed the journey of the old phoenix to Egypt from the other version. We shall see further on that he did so for apologetic considerations.[5]

vss. 155-160 (escorted by birds, see p. 228), vss. 161-170 (sex, identity of old and young phoenix, meaning, see p. 365, 381-385).

[1] This is done particularly by Egyptologists who compare the *benu* with the phoenix, e.g. A. de Buck, *De zegepraal van het licht. Voorstellingen en symbolen uit den Oud-Egyptischen zonnedienst*, Amsterdam, 1930, 82-87.

[2] See e.g. p. 281.

[3] M. Schanz, C. Hosius and G. Krüger, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, III, 3rd ed., Munich, 1922, 432 (on 433 a short review of the opinions on the relationship between Lactantius and Claudian); further Miss Fitzpatrick, 37, Sbordone, *La fenice*, 22-27, Rapisarda, 76-81, whose rendition of the "agreements", p. 76, is completely uncritical and often incorrect, and Walla, 135-139. C. Pascal, *Sul carme "De ave phoenice" attribuito a Lattanzio*, in *Rendiconto della Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti*, NS, 18, 1904, 234(-235), n. 1, and *idem*, *Letteratura latina medievale*, Catania, 1908, 14, n. 1, assumes a common source, which indeed seems to be the most likely hypothesis.

[4] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 72-100, see p. 225, and also p. 332 (abode) and p. 200, 220 (death and revival).

[5] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025 A-C), see also p. 194.

Lastly, Horapollo offers a version of the origin of the phoenix that deviates radically from the current Classical conceptions: as its death draws near the old phoenix inflicts a wound on itself, the fluid from which gives rise to a young phoenix that immediately departs with the old phoenix for Heliopolis in Egypt. There, the old bird dies at sunrise, at which the young one starts out on the return journey.[1] Certain elements of this report can be traced to other sources, but Horapollo himself seems to have been responsible for the general story.[2]

The two principal versions of the phoenix myth and the various traditions within them raise the question of whether the myth can be shown to have followed a distinct development. We shall return to this question in our final chapter.

The revival of the phoenix was represented several times in Classical and Early Christian art, in almost all cases inspired by the fire version, as will be discussed in the treatment of that version. Only one case does not concern the renewal accomplished by flames, without a distinct reference to the other version. This case concerns the remarkable double phoenix found in the tomb of the *Valerii* in the necropolis below the Vatican. A niche in this grave carries a drawing of the head of Christ, the upper part of which makes a transition into two birds joined to form one body. Margherita Guarducci, who discovered this drawing, dates it at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century.[3]

On the common body of the two birds is the word *Vibus* (= *vivus*, "the living one"), and next to the righthand bird appears the word *Pho[e]neus* (corrected by the same hand to read *phoeniceus*) *avis*,

[1] Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, II, 57.

[2] See p. 197. In his commentary on Horapollo, J. Vergote attempted to combine the versions of Horapollo and Herodotus; the latter shows "*que parfois le phénix n'arrive pas à temps en Égypte et qu'il meurt à l'étrangère*", B. van de Walle-J. Vergote, *Hieroglyphica d'Horapollon*, in *Chronique d'Égypte*, 17, no. 35, 1943, 69 (*ad* I, 35); *idem*, *Chron. d'Ég.*, 18, no. 36, 1943, 217 (*ad* II, 57): "*deux aspects du même mythe*". This suggested premature death of the phoenix is not supported anywhere in the Classical sources; the marked differences between Herodotus and Horapollo cannot be removed by the proposed harmonization.

[3] M. Guarducci, *Cristo e San Pietro in un documento precostantiniano della necropoli vaticana*, Rome, 1953, 31, 70-71; see pl. XV and XVI.

"the Phoenician" or "purple-red bird".[1] Under the head of the left-hand bird appears the inscription *vixisti* "thou hast lived", above the one on the right *avis [r]evibis*, "thou liveth again, bird". From this Guarducci correctly concluded that the bird on the left is the dying and the one on the right the living phoenix.[2] Guarducci also gives the following notations for other inscriptions: *Unicus a[vi]s... Novo [ma]ne ter canis avis...*; *Phen[ix avis?]*;... *[u]nicus avis canis*; *Canis in astris cele[s]tis [a]vis*; and *[Avi]s caele[stis]*.[3] Some of these inscriptions are so small and indistinct that Guarducci's readings proved impossible to confirm at the site. We shall return to a few of them in another connection.[4] Here, it will suffice to note that the otherwise not very gifted draughtsman made a successful attempt to show the genesis of the phoenix from itself and to express the identity of the young with the old bird. At the same time he established a distinct relationship between the renewal of the phoenix and the resurrection of Christ, who is the true *Vivus*. With respect to this symbolism too, the drawing in the grave of the *Valerii* is unique in Early Christian art. In the literary sources we find the phoenix as symbol of Christ only in the *Physiologus* and texts influenced by it. In most of the Early Christian texts the phoenix is used to demonstrate the possibility of the resurrection of the flesh at the end of time. These interpretations were of course not entirely independent of each other, just as the eschatological resurrection of the dead cannot be viewed apart from the resurrection of Christ. For as early as Paul it was said that "Christ was raised to life—the firstfruits of the harvest of the dead. For since it was a man who brought death into the world, a man also brought resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all men die, so in Christ all will be brought to life" (*1 Cor.* xv. 20-22). It may therefore be considered probable that the drawing in the

[1] Guarducci, 32-33.
[2] Guarducci, 33, 34.
[3] Guarducci, 38-40.
[4] See p. 284. A. Ferrua, *Tre note d'iconografia paleocristiana*, in *Miscellanea G. Belvederi*, (Coll. "Amici delle Catacombe", XXIII), Città del Vaticano, 1954-1955, 276, n. 5, has expressed grave doubts concerning the value of Guarducci's discovery, on the basis of the indistinctness of the drawing and the inscriptions: "*perchè nè l'immagine stessa nè le preziose didascalie che le si leggono attorno mi paiono sufficientemente assodate*".

tomb of the *Valerii* reflects the conception of the resurrection of Christ as promising the resurrection of mankind.

2. The Preparation for Death

Before dying, the phoenix is said to take several necessary steps. It was generally believed that it knew that the moment of its death was approaching. Some writers held that natural intuition gave it this knowledge,[1] others that it could tell by the weakness and exhaustion of old age.[2] Both Dionysius and Claudian developed the latter concept in some detail. According to the former, the phoenix begins to build a pyre when, having become old, it notices the slowness of its flight or that its sight has become dimmer.[3] The latter point plays a special role in the traditions concerning the renewal of the eagle, and this may have influenced Dionysius.[4] Claudian, who

[1] Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59: *cum sibi finem vitae adesse praesaga quadam naturae suae aestimatione cognoverit; idem*, *Exameron*, V, 23, 79: *quae cum sibi finem vitae adesse adverterit;* Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 3: ἐπὰν γνοίη τὸν καιρὸν τῆς αὐτοῦ τελευτῆς ἐνστάντα; Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaem.* (*PG* 18, 732A): προαισθάνεται γὰρ τὴν ἀποβίωσιν; Michael Glycas, *Annales*, I (*PG* 158, 108C) αὐτοὶ καὶ γὰρ οἱ Ἕλληνες περὶ αὐτοῦ διηγοῦνται ὅτι προγνοὺς τὸ τέλος αὐτοῦ; Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 768: *Proprie tum prescia mortis.*

[2] Statius, *Silvae*, II, 4, 36 (on the parrot of Melior, compared with the phoenix): *senio nec fessus inerti;* Lactantius, 59-60: *quae postquam vitae iam mille peregerit annos / ac sic reddiderint tempora longa gravem;* Dracontius, *Romulea*, X, 104: *senio lassata vetusto;* Sidonius, *Carmina*, II, 416: *nec non pulsante senecta;* Lactantius Placidus, *Narr. fab. Ovidianarum*, XV, 37; *cum est senectute pressa;* Isidore, *Etymolog.*, XII, 7, 22: *dum se viderit senuisse;* so also in Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, VIII, 6, (*PL* 111, 246B) and Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, I, 49 (*PL* 177, 48C); *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, no. 3: *cum senserit se gravari senio; idem*, no. 4; Thomas of Cantimpré, *De naturis rerum*, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XVII, 74: *gravescere cepit;* Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42): *cum sentit se aetate gravari;* Reinerus, *De ineptis cuiusdam idiotae libellus* (*MGH*, scr., xx, 597) *quem dum extensius evum languidulo marcore contraxerit.*

[3] Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32: ἢν γάρ ποτε γηράσας πρὸς τὰς πτήσεις ἑαυτὸν ἴδοι νωθέστερον, ἢ τὰς αὐγὰς τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐλασσουμένας.

[4] See p. 279-280; for other points of agreement between the phoenix and the eagle, see p. 172, n. 6, 251-252, and 411, n. 1.

goes into great detail concerning the senile infirmities of the phoenix, describes how, enfeebled by its many years, the bird must submit to its age, and compares it to a tall pine-tree which, ravaged by storms, sways on a peak in the Caucasus, soon to be brought down at last by its own unstable weight: part of it is torn off by the perpetual wind, another part breaks off having been rotted by the rain, and still another part succumbs to old age.[1] A similar dismemberment can be seen in the phoenix: its failing light diminishes further and the now faint star is extinguished by the chill of old age. It resembles Diana at the moment when she hides behind the clouds and disappears until her horn is barely visible. The wings of the phoenix, which once cleft the clouds, barely lift from the ground. Knowing that its lifespan has been completed, it begins to prepare for the resurrection of its body.[2]

The comparison between the phoenix and the ancient pine-tree seems rather strange at first, but becomes understandable if we remember that the pine-tree was an image of perpetually self-renewing nature and was therefore seen as a tree of life.[3] It was of course realized that the pine-tree too could die, but this did not detract from its symbolic meaning. The great similarity between the speculations on the pine-tree and those on the phoenix did not escape Claudian, and that is why he drew the parallel between the decay of the aging phoenix and the slow decline of the pine-tree.

[1] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 30-35. *Tum multis gravior tandem subiungitur annis / lustrorum numero victus. Ceu lassa procellis / ardua Caucasio nutat de culmine pinus. / Seram ponderibus pronis tractura ruinam; / pars cadit adsiduo flatu, pars imbre peresa / rumpitur, abripuit partem vitiosa vetustas.*

[2] *Phoenix*, 36-42: *Iam breve decrescit lumen languetque senili / segnis stella gelu, qualis cum forte tenetur / nubibus et dubio vanescit Cynthia cornu. / Iam solitae medios alae transcurrere nimbos / vix ima tolluntur humo. Tunc conscius aevi / defuncti reducisque parans exordia formae.*

[3] *Cf.* Forstner, *Symbole*, 236-238, H. Bergema, *De Boom des Levens in Schrift en Historie*, Thesis Free Univ. Amsterdam, Hilversum, 1938, 511-512. Forstner, 238, cites Ambrose, *Exameron*, III, 16, 68, where we read: *Itaque in pinea ista imaginem sui natura videtur exprimere, quae... et partus suos quadam annorum vice et ordine refert, donec consummatio temporis impleatur.* Hubaux and Leroy, 28, thought that Claudian chose this tree for purposes of comparison because it belonged to Cybele, who was identified with the morning star; they based this assumption on the connection accepted by them between the phoenix and Venus (see p. 30).

Thus, according to Claudian, the deterioration of the phoenix is expressed in the weakening of the bird's light, in the slow extinguishing of its star, and in the impotence of its wings. It has been thought that the light and the star meant the clear eye and the pupil of the bird.[1] In that case Claudian, despite his regard for detail, was only interested in describing the same signs of senility as Dionysius. But apparently the latter was the only author to remark on the diminished visual acuity of the phoenix. Just before Claudian's description of the old age of the phoenix he mentions a number of details about its appearance, and it is virtually certain that it is to these that he is referring here: the light that diminishes is the light that shines around the phoenix in a fiery ring and the star that fades is the star that rises above its head and pierces the dark with its brilliant light.[2] Claudian compares the decreasing light of this star with that of the moon retiring behind clouds, an image that would hardly have been appropriate if he had had the phoenix's visual faculty in mind. According to Claudian, thus, the infirmities of old age become apparent in those aspects of the phoenix that characterize it most distinctly as the bird of the sun. We shall see that in Claudian it is in this sense, as bird of the sun, that the phoenix makes an appeal to the sun in order to accomplish the renewal of its life.[3]

When the phoenix feels that the hour of its death is approaching, it makes itself a nest or pyre from various kinds of scented materials. The most detailed description of the latter is found in Lactantius: in the grove in which it has settled[4] the bird collects the essences and aromatics ordinarily supplied by Assyrians, Arabs, Pygmies, Indians, or Sabeans.[5] These names introduce a wide variety of aromatics, which Lactantius immediately goes on to cite: cinnamon, *amomum*, balsam, *casia*, *acanthus*, incense, spikenard, and *panacea*.[6]

[1] See the translation by M. Platnauer in the Loeb edition of Claudian, II, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, 1956, 227: "*Now the phoenix's bright eye grows dim and the pupil becomes palsied by the frost of years*".

[2] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 17-20, see also p. 236.

[3] See p. 200.

[4] See p. 183.

[5] Lactantius, 79-82, *colligit hinc sucos et odores divite silva, / quos legit Assyrius, quos opulentus Arabs, / quos Pygmeae gentes aut India carpit / aut molli generat terra Sabaea sinu.*

[6] Lactantius, 83-88: *Cinnamon hinc auramque procul spirantis amomi /*

Of these, *acanthus* and *panacea* occur only in Lactantius, the others are also found distributed over other authors who wrote on the phoenix. Only John Lydus and the *Physiologus* of Pseudo-Jerome each mention one not found in Lactantius: the former fennel and the latter amber *(electrum)*.[1]

With respect to the kinds of aromatics, only one small difference is to be found between the two main versions: in the version of the burning the most important component of the pyre is pure cinnamon *(cinnamomum)*, which does not occupy a special place among the aromatics belonging to the version of the origin of the young phoenix from the corpse of the old phoenix. This difference is unmistakable, even when it is taken into account that the latter version is mentioned in a much smaller number of texts than the former.

Of the writers who have the resurrection of the phoenix occur without a conflagration, Manilius, in Pliny, mentions incense and wild cinnamon *(casia)*; Ovid speaks of *casia*, spikenards, *cinnama*, and myrrh; and Clement of Rome says that the nest of the phoenix is composed of incense, myrrh, and other aromatics, in which he is followed by Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose.[2] The other writers

congerit et mixto balsama cum folio: / non casiae mitis nec olentis vimen acanthi, / nec turis lacrimae guttaque pinguis abest. / His addit teneras nardi pubentis aristas / et sociam myrrhae vim, panacea, tuam.

[1] Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11: καὶ παρασκευάζειν ἑαυτῷ ἔκ τε κινναμώμου καὶ φύλλων νάρδου τε καὶ μαράθου θημῶνα. Pseudo-Jerome, *Epistula XVIII*, (*PL* 30, 187B): *confert phoenix aromata et electrum arae imponit.* For *electrum* as fragrant substance, see A. Jacob, *Electrum*, in Daremberg-Saglio, *Dict. des Antiquités*, II, 2, 1892, 535, H. Blümner, *Bernstein*, in *RE*, 3, 1899, 303, and Th. Klauser-K. Schneider, *Bernstein*, in *RAC*, 2, 1954, 138-140.

[2] Pliny, X, 4: *senescentem casiae turisque surculis construere nidum, replere odoribus et superemori;* Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 398-400: *Quo simul ac casias et nardi lenis aristas / quassaque cum fulva substravit cinnama murra, / se super inponit, finitque in odoribus aevum; 1 Clement* 25, 2: σηκὸν ἑαυτῷ ποιεῖ ἐκ λιβάνου καὶ σμύρνης καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀρωμάτων; the same in Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B); Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, II, 59: *thecam sibi de ture et myrra et ceteris odoribus adornare;* virtually the same in *Exameron*, V, 23, 79; Thomas of Cantimpré, *De naturis rerum*, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XVII, 74, and dependent on him, Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42) mention the same aromatics as do Clement and others, but add *cinnamomum;* Thomas: *ex thure, mirra et cinnamomo ac ceteris aromatibus* (Albertus: *et aliis aromatibus pretiosis*).

who follow this first version only speak generally of aromatics and make no mention of the kinds.[1]

With the exception of Artemidorus, who records only *casia* and myrrh,[2] and of course of those who do not go into the nature of the aromatics,[3] all the conflagration authors mention the pure cinnamon *(cinnamomum)* as part of the pyre. In many cases it is the only scented substance mentioned in this connection.[4] When others are added, *cinnamomum* takes precedence, as in Lactantius.[5] The im-

[1] Mela, III, 83; *variis odoribus;* Lactantius Placidus, *Narr. fab. Ovid.*, XV, 37: *nido ex odoribus facto;* Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 390: τὰς καλιὰς δὲ πήγνυται δένδροις ἐξ ἀρωμάτων.

[2] Artemidorus, IV, 47: αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ποιησάμενος ἐκ κασίας τε καὶ σμύρνης πυράν; *idem* Suidas, s.v. φοῖνιξ, who took the passage unmodified from Artemidorus.

[3] Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III, 49; Eusebius, *Vita Const.*, IV, 72; Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 3; *Physiologus*, 7 in almost all versions and translations with the exception of Pseudo-Hieronymus *(electrum)* and the Syriac *Physiologus*, 29 *(cinnamomum)* (see p. 164, n. 1 and n. 4 below); Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaemeron* (*PG* 18, 732A); Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XL, 394; Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22; Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stell. ratio*, 12; Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, VIII, 6, (*PL* 111, 246B); Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus* I, 49 (*PL* 177, 48C); Petrus Damiani, *Opuscula varia*, LII, 11 (*PL* 145, 773B); Petrus Venerabilis, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, 178; Reinerus, *De ineptis cuiusdam idiotae libellus* (*MGH*, scr. 20, 597); Honorius of Autun, *Speculum Ecclesiae, de paschali die* (*PL* 172, 936A); *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, nos. 2, 3 and 4; *Schol.* on Persius, I, 46.

[4] Statius, *Silvae*, II, 6, 87: *Phariaeque exempta volucri cinnama;* Solinus, 33, 12; *rogos suos struit cinnamis; Didascalia*, 40: *portans cinnamomum;* Claudian, *De consulatu Stilichonis*, II, 420: *odorati redolent et cinnama busti* (in *Phoenix*, 42-43 he mentions not only *arentes herbas*, but also a *tumulum sabaeum* the phoenix covers with *pretiosa fronde;* with this last Claudian probably thought of cinnamon, which was thought to come from Saba; see p. 172, n. 4: Avitus, I, 239); Ausonius, XXVI, *Gryphus*, II, 17; *ales cinnameo radiatus... nido;* Ishô'dâdh, *Comm. in Job., ad* xl. 20: "... *nach Ägypten, indem er in seinem Schnabel Zimmetrinde trägt*"; Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 769: *intrat odoriferum, quem dant sibi cinnama, nidum; Syriac Physiologus*, 29 (Land, IV, 55): *affert sub utraque ala cinnamum radicem suavem et ligna colligit;* see also Sidonius in n. 1 on p. 166.

[5] *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15: φέρον πλῆθος κινναμώμου κασσίας τε καὶ ξυλοβαλσάμου (an inferior kind of balsam; see P. Walger, *Balsambaum*, in *RE*, 2, 2, 1896, 2838); Dracontius, *Romulea*, X, 105-106; *cinnama, folium nardum, tus, balsama, amomum;* Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11 (see p. 164, n. 1); *cf.* also, in the Middle Ages, Amedeus of Lausanne, *Homiliae de Maria Virginea Matre*, VI, 292-295: *O Phoenix aromatizans gratius cinnamomo et balsamo et nardo suavius .. congregans omnes species electas.*

pression is obtained that, especially in the fire version, cinnamon was considered necessary for the resurrection of the phoenix. The indispensability of *cinnamomum* is expressed in an unusual way in a poem by Sidonius in which the triumphal return of Bacchus from conquered India to Thebes is described: on this journey the god took with him as one of his prisoners the phoenix, which feared that it would now be forced to die for the last time—because it had lost its cinnamon.[1]

We must examine in some detail the reasons for this close relationship between cinnamon and the fire that consumed the phoenix. Hubaux and Leroy, who have given a thorough discussion of the various traditions concerning cinnamon, are of the opinion that in Classical thinking cinnamon was inconceivable without the phoenix because it was the phoenix that brought the cinnamon from uninhabited places to the world of man; thus, even without the burning of the sun bird there would have been a relationship between the phoenix and cinnamon.[2] But the argumentation for this hypothesis must be regarded at the very least as weak. Herodotus says that large birds bring cinnamon to the nests they build on steep mountains inaccessible to humans, who can only acquire this spice by trickery.[3] Aristotle and Aelian give these birds the name *cinnamomum*, evidently taken from the spice for whose transport they are responsible.[4] Pliny and Solinus call the cinnamon-carrying bird *cinnamolgus*.[5] But when Pliny speaks about the aromatics *cinnamomum* and *casia* and in doing so refers unequivocally to Herodotus, he mentions that these materials are found in the nests of birds, particu-

[1] Sidonius, *Carmina*, XXII, 50-51: *Adfuit hic etiam post perdita cinnama phoenix, / formidans mortem sibi non superesse secundam.* Sidonius always mentions *cinnamomum* when he speaks of the phoenix: *Carmina*, II, 417; VII, 353-354; IX, 325-326; XI, 125.

[2] See Hubaux and Leroy, 68-97, where they revert almost completely to their earlier study *Vulgo nascetur amomum*, in *Mélanges Bidez*, (Annuaire de l'Inst. de Philol. et d'Histoire orientales, II), Brussels, 1934, 505-530.

[3] Herodotus, III, 111: ὄρνιθας δὲ λέγουσι μεγάλας φορέειν ταῦτα τὰ κάρφεα τὰ ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ Φοινίκων μαθόντες κινάμωμον καλέομεν.

[4] Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.*, IX, 13 (616a): φασὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ κιννάμωμον ὄρνεον εἶναι οἱ ἐκ τῶν τόπων ἐκείνων, καὶ τὸ καλούμενον κιννάμωμον φέρειν ποθὲν τοῦτο τὸ ὄρνεον; Aelian, II, 34; XVII, 21.

[5] Pliny, X, 97: *In Arabia cinnamolgus avis appellatur; cinnami surculis nidificant;* Solinus, 33, 15.

larly in that of the phoenix.[1] Hubaux and Leroy assume that this last statement by Pliny reflects the original version of the tradition of Herodotus and Aristotle: the bird that brings cinnamon to the world of man is the phoenix.[2] But it is important to note here that in his discussion of the phoenix Pliny does not mention *cinnamomum* and that in his treatment of the *cinnamolgus* he does not identify this bird as the phoenix. It is therefore much more probable that Pliny took it upon himself here to add the phoenix to the nameless birds of Herodotus because he knew the tradition that cinnamon was one of the most important components of the nest and pyre of the phoenix. The change introduced by Avienus in his Latin version of the *Periegesis* of Dionysius Periegetes can be explained in the same way. The original author had mentioned that as one of the extraordinary events accompanying the birth of Dionysus, birds had brought cinnamon leaves from unknown islands.[3] The most important modifications of Avienus were the replacement of the vague "birds" of Dionysius by "the bird beloved of God" and to change *cinnamomum* to *amomum*.[4] The latter alteration is hardly surprising, in view of the frequency with which these aromatics were confused.[5] As early a commentator as Salmasius was of the opinion that Avienus meant the phoenix by *ales amica Deo*, in which he was followed by all commentators on this passage.[6] Thus Avienus, like Pliny, had the phoenix in mind when speaking of the birds that transported cin-

[1] Pliny, XII, 85: *Cinnamomum et casias fabulose narravit antiquitas princepsque Herodotus avium nidis et privatim phoenicis.*

[2] Hubaux and Leroy, 73, where they also reject Bochart's suggestion that the mention of the phoenix in XII, 85 may have arisen from the ἀπὸ Φοινίκων μαθόντες of Herodotus (see p. 166, n. 3); nevertheless, this may well have played a role, in addition to the factors mentioned below.

[3] Dionysius Periegetes, *Periegesis*, 944-945: ὄρνιθες δ' ἑτέρωθεν ἀοικήτων ἀπὸ νήσων / ἦλθον φύλλα φέροντες ἀκηρασίων κινναμώμων; a discussion of this text is found in Hubaux and Leroy, 92-94 and *iidem, Vulgo nascetur amomum*, 517-520.

[4] Avienus, *Descriptio orbis terrae*, 1126-1127: *internis etiam procul undique ab oris / ales amica deo largum congessit amomum.*

[5] *Cf.* Hubaux and Leroy, 96 and *idem, Vulgo nascetur amomum*, 524-525.

[6] Claudius Salmasius, *Plinianae exercitationes in Gaii Iulii Solini polyhistora*, Parisiis, 1629, 399-400: "*Phoenix est quem alitem amicam deo vocat, id est Soli*", also p. 555; *int. al.* followed by H. Frieseman in his edition of Avienus, Amsterdam, 1786, LIX.

namon. It is unlikely that he was led to do so because he had better information at his disposal on this point than his source.[1] It seems far more likely that the birds of Dionysius made him think of the phoenix because they carried *cinnamomum*, of all aromatics the one most closely related to the phoenix.[2]

Thus, Pliny and Avienus offer no real proof that the phoenix had from ancient times played a role in the legendary stories about cinnamon. This means that another explanation must be sought for the close connection between it and the bird, and this can be found in a tradition preserved in Pliny and Theophrastus. The men who collected cinnamon with so much effort were said to have divided their booty into three parts; one part, selected by lot, was reserved for the sun and was left at the spot; this part was said to take fire spontaneously immediately afterward. But Theophrastus adds that in reality this is merely an invention.[3] Pliny had recounted another story just before this one: cinnamon could only be gathered with the permission of the god, who according to some was Jupiter. Permission was said to be given only after a great sacrifice, but even then the cinnamon might only be gathered before sunrise and after sunset, and a portion of it had to be dedicated to the god.[4] It seems certain that this deity was the sun god.

These texts show why cinnamon is so often mentioned in the fire version. Like the bird, cinnamon is consecrated to the sun; it ignites itself when it serves as a gift to the sun god. We shall see that the phoenix too was said to take fire spontaneously, but that this was also said to occur under the influence of the heat of the rays of the

[1] Hubaux and Leroy, 94: "*il a précisé les données de la legende, sans qu'il soit possible, ni quant à Pline ni quant à Aviénus, de retrouver la source de leur information complémentaire*".

[2] The ease with which *cinnamomum* was associated with the nest of the phoenix is perhaps indicated too by one of Martial's epigrams (VI, 55, 1-2) in which he refers to the over-perfumed Coracinus: *semper casiaque cinnamoque / et nido niger alitis superbae.*

[3] Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.*, IX, 5, 2: εἶθ' ὅταν ἐξενέγκωσι διελόντες τρία μέρη διακληροῦνται πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἣν ἂν λάχῃ ὁ ἥλιος καταλείπουσιν· ἀπίοντες δ' εὐθὺς ὁρᾶν φασιν καιομένην ταύτην· οὗτος μὲν οὖν τῷ ὄντι μῦθος; Pliny, XII, 90: *est et alia* (see next n.) *fama cum Sole dividi, ternasque partes fieri, dein sorte gemina discerni, quodque Soli cesserit relinqui ac sponte conflagrare.*

[4] Pliny, XII, 89: *non tamen ut ante ortum solis aut post occasum liceat.*

sun and after the bird had offered its age-worn body to the sun for destruction.[1] A similar role of the sun god must also be assumed for the spontaneous burning of the cinnamon. These points of agreement between the phoenix and cinnamon must have led to an important role for cinnamon in the burning of the bird of the sun.[2] Furthermore, Pliny mentions as a general characteristic of cinnamon that it catches fire easily: the heat of the south wind is often sufficient to set a whole forest of it ablaze.[3] Even apart from the special relationship between cinnamon and the sun, the former could be considered indispensable for the pyre of the phoenix because of all aromatics it burned the best. The same characteristic was assigned to *electrum* in the *Physiologus* of Pseudo-Jerome.[4]

The collecting of aromatics by the old phoenix must be seen against the background of Classical burial practices. It was customary to place many kinds of scented materials on the deathbed, the bier, and beside and in the grave, as well to combine them with the pyre and mix them with the ashes in the urn.[5] For this purpose the same aromatics were used as those mentioned in connection with the phoenix,[6] some texts giving, instead of or together with a list, the

[1] See p. 202. *Cf.* Pliny, XII, 90 on cinnamon: *sponte conflagrare* e.g. with *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15 on the phoenix: αὐτομάτως φλεχθῆναι and Claudian, *Phoenix*, 57: *sponte crematur.*

[2] Furthermore, it is here even clearer why Pliny and Avienus could think of the phoenix in connection with cinnamon-carrying birds. Hubaux and Leroy, 83-85, repeat, with respect to Pliny's texts mentioned on p. 168, n. 3 and here in n. 3, their already mentioned opinion that to evaluate Pliny's knowledge of the phoenix myth it is necessary to consider not only his discussions of the phoenix but also those on the bird *cinnamolgus* and on *cinnamomum.* They did not notice, or at least did not take into account, the fact that in XII, 90 Pliny based himself on Theophrastus.

[3] Pliny, XII, 93: *austros ibi tam ardentis flare, ut aestatibus silvas accendant, invenimus apud auctores;* he explains by these fires the high price of cinnamon.

[4] See p. 164.

[5] See Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, 46-47, from which some of the texts below are taken.

[6] Ovid, *Trist.*, III, 3, 69 *(foliis et amomi pulvere)*; *idem, Ex ponto*, I, 9, 52 *(amoma)*; *idem, Fasti*, III, 561 *(unguenta)*; Persius, III, 104 *(amomis)*; Statius, *Silvae*, III, 3, 132 *(amomo)*; *idem, Thebais*, VI, 59-61 *(Arabum strue, Eoas opes, tura, cinnama)*; Martial, *Epigr.*, X, 97, 2 *(murram, casias)*, XI, 54, 1-3 *(unguenta, casias, murram, tura, cinnama)*; Propertius, IV, 7, 32 *(nardo)*; Apuleius, *Apologia (De magia)*, 32,4 *(tus, casiam, myrram, ceterosque odores)*; Herodianus, III, 15, 7 (κόνιν σὺν ἀρώμασιν ἐς κάλπιν).

names of the countries from which they came.[1] The quantities of spices used and the amounts of money spent for them are often inconceivable today. The importance of the deceased or of his family was expressed particularly in this way: according to Plutarch, at the cremation of Sylla the women brought so many aromatics that besides the amount carried by 210 bearers, there was enough to make images of Sylla and of a *lictor* out of expensive incense and cinnamon;[2] in the cortège of Herod the Great there were 500 slaves and freedmen bearing aromatics;[3] and reliable experts reported that at the cremation of Poppaea, Nero used more aromatics than *Arabia Felix* yielded in a year.[4] Against this background we must also see the virtually exhaustive lists of aromatics and the countries producing them given in Lactantius: the huge quantity indicates the importance of the bird.[5]

Thus, the solitary phoenix performs, just before its death, an act that in the world of man fell to the relatives of the deceased. Lactantius expressed this very trenchantly: the bird strews itself with

[1] Lygdamus in *Corpus Tibullianum*, III, 2, 23-25: *Illic quas mittit dives Panchaia merces / Eoique Arabes, dives et Assyria, / et nostri memores lacrimae fundantur eodem;* Statius, *Silvae*, II, 1, 160-161: *quod Cilicum flores, quod munera graminis Indi / quodque Arabes Phariique Palaestinique liquores*... and *idem*, *Silvae*, V, 1, 210-214: *omne illic stipatum examine longo / ver Arabum Cilicumque fluit floresque Sabaei / Indorumque arsura seges praereptaque templis / tura, Palaestinis simul Hebaeique liquores / coryciaeque comae Cinyreaque germina. Cf.* with these texts Lactantius, 79-82 (see p. 163).

[2] Plutarch, *Sylla*, 38: τοσοῦτο πλῆθος ... ὥστ' ἄνευ τῶν ἐν φορήμασιν δέκα καὶ διακοσίοις διακομιζομένων, πλασθῆναι μὲν εἴδωλον εὐμέγεθες αὐτοῦ Σύλλα, πλασθῆναι δὲ καὶ ῥαβδοῦχον ἔκ τε λιβανωτοῦ πολυτελοῦς καὶ κινναμώμου.

[3] Josephus, *De bello Judaico*, I, 673: πεντακόσιοι δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τῶν οἰκετῶν καὶ ἀπελευθέρων ἀρωματοφόροι; also *Antiquit.*, XVII, 199. Josephus' description of the funeral procession of Herod appears to have influenced the later tradition concerning that of Jacob, in which, however, fifty of Jacob's slaves were said to have preceded the bier strewing the road with myrrh and other aromatics, *cf.* Ginzberg, II, 149, 152-153 and Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 386-387. Large quantities of aromatic materials were used even as early as the burials of the Judean kings, see 2 *Chron.* xvi.14; *Jer.* xxxiv.5; also 2 *Chron.* xxi.19.

[4] Pliny, XII, 83: *Periti rerum adseverant non ferre tantum annuo fetu quantum Nero princeps novissimo Poppaeae suae die concremaverit.*

[5] See p. 163, n. 5 and 6; *cf.* the *ca.* 100 pounds of myrrh and aloe at the burial of Jesus, *John* xix.39.

aromatics in order to die at its own funeral.[1] The use of aromatics in connection with death and funerals in the Classical world was not just an act of rather pointless piety, even though its deeper meaning was not always consciously thought of. The pleasing fragrance of the aromatics was an indication of the life that triumphs over death.[2]

It was usually assumed that the phoenix collected its scented materials in the region where it lived, even though it burned itself elsewhere.[3] A few related texts, however, say that it brought its spices from another country. According to the oldest recension of the *Physiologus*, the bird lived in India and went, before its end in the Egyptian Heliopolis, to Lebanon to fill its wings with aromatics there.[4] The reason for the introduction of the short visit to Lebanon cannot be established with certainty, but several possiblities can be put forward. Türk has pointed to the homonymy in Greek of the words for incense (λίβανος) and Lebanon (Λίβανος) and assumed that one of the aromatics of the phoenix was erroneously taken as a proper name.[5] It is also possible that we must see in the mention of Lebanon a reflection of the tradition that related the phoenix to Syria-Phoenicia.[6] If the writer of the *Physiologus* wished to mention this region as well as India and Egypt, it is conceivable that he would have made special mention of that part of it called Lebanon, since from ancient times this chain of mountains had been famed for its

[1] Lactantius, 91-92: *Ore dehinc sucos membris circumque supraque / inicit exsequiis inmoritura suis.*

[2] See E. Lohmeyer, *Vom göttlichen Wohlgeruch*, in *Sitzungsber. der Heidelberger Akad. d. Wissensch.*, Philos-hist. Kl, 1919, 9, 7 and *passim;* also here p. 226, 335. This must also have been the meaning of the enormous *cinnamomum* root Pliny saw in the temple of Augustus on the Palatine Hill, XII, 94: *Radicem eius (sc. cinnamomi) magni ponderis videmus in Palatii templo, quod fecerat Divo Augusto coniunx Augusta aureae paterae impositam, ex qua guttae editae annis omnibus in grana durabantur, donec id delubrum incendio consumptum est.*

[3] Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, IV, 47 assumes that the phoenix collects his aromatics in Egypt, just before his death. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B), assumes the same, but for apologetic reasons, see p. 194. Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, III, 49, has the phoenix build its nest near the sources of the Nile, see p. 306.

[4] *Physiologus*, 7: κατὰ πεντακόσια ἔτη εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου, καὶ γεμίζει τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἀρομάτων.

[5] Türk, 3460, with reference to *1 Clement*, 25 (λίβανος, see p. 164, n. 2).

[6] See p. 51-53.

wonderful fragrances.[1] It seems most probable, however, that the Judaeo-Christian symbolism of Lebanon formed the background.[2] In the *Byzantine Physiologus* too it is assumed that the phoenix brings its aromatics from Lebanon, but according to this text it does not have to go there to get them because it spends its life there.[3] The *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil* no longer speaks of the abode of the phoenix and does not mention Lebanon: before its death the bird now makes three trips to Paradise, where it fills its wings and claws with the scented wood and aromatic plants to be found there.[4]

The flight to Paradise is also found in a few other texts. According to Avitus, the phoenix goes to Paradise because there the cinnamon grows that is incorrectly held by many to come from the Sabeans.[5] In the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, too, it is said that before burning itself on the altar, the phoenix goes to Paradise and takes three branches from the fragrant trees.[6] A large number of Jewish and Christian texts bear witness to the pervasion of Paradise by exquisite scents, and the same idea was held in the Classical world

[1] For this, see H. Guthe, *Libanon*, in *Realenc. für prot. Theologie und Kirche*, 11, 1902, 436, 7ff.; see also *Hos*. xiv.7.

[2] See p. 307-309.

[3] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: μένει δὲ [ἔτη πεντακόσια] εἰς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ Λιβάνου..., καὶ μετὰ πεντακόσια ἔτη γεμεῖ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἀρωμάτων, see further p. 307-309.

[4] *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*, 21: κατὰ τρεῖς χρόνους ἀπέρχεται ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ καὶ αἴρει ἀπὸ τῶν εὐόσμων ξύλων καὶ μυρισμάτων τῶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, γεμίζον τὰς πτέρυγας καὶ τοὺς πόδας.

[5] Avitus, I, 238-239: *Hic, quae donari mentitur fama Sabaeis, / cinnama nascuntur, vivax quae colligit ales*. According to Sidonius, *Carmina*, II, 417-418, the phoenix fetches its cinnamon from the region where the palace of Aurora is located, a place described with the unmistakeable features of Paradise.

[6] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 22-23, see translation on p. 45. In another Coptic text (see O. von Lemm, *Koptische Miscellen*, LXXXI, in *Bull. de l'Ac. Imp. de St. Petersbourg*, Sér. VI, 4, St. Petersburg, 1910, 361-366 and Van Lantschoot, 344-345, who gives the text in normal Sahidic) the fetching of aromatics from Paradise is ascribed to the eagle: "*and Aaron takes the fragrant herbs from the eagle, which it has brought from Paradise*". The upper part of the verso of this fragment carries a gloss on "Aaron" in very bad Coptic: "*... and a thirsty eagle goes to Paradise, he fills his wings with fragrant herbs and carries them to Aaron*". The content of this apocryphal report is not clear, but in any case it is the eagle which performs an act that was also, and with more point, assigned to the phoenix. We are probably concerned here with a case of a combining of the traditions pertaining to the eagle and

concerning the Isles of the Blessed.[1] This conception was so well known that it is quite possible that various authors arrived independently at the idea of having the phoenix go to Paradise for its aromatics. Nevertheless, there also seems to have been a literary tradition on this point, as witnessed by the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* and the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*: according to the text of the former, the phoenix brings three fragrant twigs from Paradise; according to that of the latter, it went there three times for aromatics. Of these views, the former seems to have the greater claim to originality.

In the apocryphal stories of the death of Adam and Eve, too, a role is played by branches from Paradise, again with mention of the number three. In several Latin manuscripts of the *Vita Adae et Avae* the angel gives Seth, who had come with Eve to Paradise to get help for the dying Adam, a branch from the Tree of Knowledge bearing three leaves, which he later places on Adam's grave.[2] According to an old Slavonic translation from the Greek, Seth received from Michael three branches from the same tree, but each of a different species: one of pine, one of cedar, and one of cypress. Adam recognized them and plaited them into a wreath which he put on his head and with which he was burried; later, a tall tree grew from the wreath.[3] According to all the versions, it was from the tree originating from the branch or branches from Paradise that the cross of Christ was made. The texts say explicitly that the three branches

the phoenix, the latter apparently being the primary one. The remarks in several Coptic texts about the bird *Alloë*, which goes to Paradise too, also appear to derive from phoenix traditions, *cf.* Von Lemm, 359-361, Van Lantschoot, 345, and Crum, *Copt. Dict.*, 6, s.v.

[1] An abundance of Jewish and Christian material is found in Ginzberg, see vol. VII (Index), 360, s.v. *Paradise, the fragrance of; cf.* also in *Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, 13, 3, the Paradise vision of Saturnus: *universi odore inenarrabili alebamur, qui nos satiabat;* Ephraem Syrus, *Hymni de paradiso*, X and XI 39-46, (trans. Beck, see p. 356, n. 3). For the classical side, see e.g. Lucian, *Verae narrationes*, II, 5: ἤδη δὲ πλησίον ἦμεν, καὶ θαυμαστή τις αὔρα περιέπνευσεν ἡμᾶς, ἡδεῖα καὶ εὐώδης, οἵαν φησὶν ὁ συγγραφεὺς Ἡρόδοτος ἀπόζειν τῆς εὐδαίμονος Ἀραβίας.

[2] See E. C. Quinn, *The quest of Seth for the Oil of Life*, Chicago, 1962, 88-90.

[3] Quinn, 71 and 90, and V. Jagić, *Slavische Beiträge zu den biblischen Apokryphen*, in *Denkschr. der kais. Akad. der Wiss.*, philos.-histor. Classe, Vienna, 42, 1893, 24-25, 88 (trans.); for related texts, see Quinn, 54-55, n. 56, and also Jagić, 25 (Slav. *De ligno crucis*).

are an indication of the divine Trinity.[1] The sense of these stories is clear: the wood of the Tree of Knowledge, through which Adam and his descendants knew death, finally became the wood of the Cross and thus a new Tree of Life.

From these conceptions the meaning of the three branches brought from Paradise by the phoenix before its death becomes clear. In the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* the phoenix is, according to the preacher, a type of Christ:[2] the fragrant twigs bring the phoenix death but also new life, just as Christ found death on the wood from Paradise but also won the New Life. In all this, the above-mentioned Classical view that the aromatics used for death and burial are a symbol of life, emerges with new force from a completely Christian background. But quite apart from the parallelism between the phoenix and Christ, there is another element that must be taken into account. For the dying Adam the branches from Paradise are a sign of God's mercy; they give him the certainty that Death does not have the final word, but will ultimately be defeated by Life. This also holds for the phoenix, but in its case death immediately becomes life.

The certainty of an early resurrection is also indicated by the branches playing a role in the Coptic version of the *Dormitio et transitus Mariae*, particularly in the sermon given by Theodosius, the Jacobite patriarch of Alexandria (536-567), on the death and glorification of Mary. Of this sermon the entire Bohairic version and part of the Sahidic version have been preserved; we have already referred to them.[3]

According to the Bohairic text, Peter and John are directed by Christ, shortly before the death of Mary, to go to the altar in the temple and bring from there the heavenly garments and aromatics "which my good Father and the Holy Ghost have sent me for the honour of the body of my beloved mother".[4] In the Sahidic version

[1] Quinn, 51 (English version of Bodleian Ms. 343), 106 (the so-called *Legende*); that the Cross was made of the three kinds of wood mentioned in all these texts is found in as early an author as Chrysostom (*ad Isa.*, lx.13-LXX), see Quinn, 58.

[2] Copt. *Sermon on Mary*, 28, 51 (see p. 47).

[3] See p. 38, n. 1 for the editions of Chaîne and Robinson.

[4] Chaîne, 291, 309 (trans.), Robinson, 108, 109 (trans.), James, *Apocr. N.T.*, 199.

these directions are given to the twelve virgins who joined the apostles after the resurrection of Christ: "And they brought palm branches and other sweet-smelling branches, which they brought him from the trees of Paradise".[1] Both versions go on to say that Mary laid herself down on the branches and aromatics spread on her bed and then died. In the Bohairic text only, Christ then directs Peter and John to prepare her body for burial: "And He, the Lord, stretched out his hand eastwards and brought us three flourishing palm branches and perfumes from the Paradise of Delight. Again he turned his face and brought three branches of olive from an olive tree, from which the dove brought to Noah, that he might know that the Lord had mercy on the world".[2] There is still another Coptic sermon, ascribed to Euodius, in which we find the conception that Mary was buried in heavenly garments and with flourishing palm branches from the heavenly places.[3] The Greek and Latin texts treating the Virgin's end give a different story: at the annunciation of her death, Mary is given a single palm branch by an angel who directs her to have it carried before the bier at her funeral.[4] According to Germanus of Constantinople, this palm branch is a symbol of the victory over death and a sign of unfading life.[5] This of course also underlies the palm branches from Paradise in the Coptic text. It seems certain, too, that the heavenly garments and the palm branches from Paradise on which Mary dies and goes to meet her glorification, were borrowed from the Biblical story of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, when people spread their garments over the road

1 Robinson, 74, 75 (trans.).

2 Chaîne, 292, 309 (trans.), Robinson, 110, 111 (trans.), James, 199; it was a Jewish tradition that the olive twig that the dove brought to Noah came from Paradise, see Ginzberg, V, 186.

3 Robinson, 59 and 61.

4 This idea is also assumed in a Coptic text; see James, *Apocr. N.T.*, 200; also e.g. *Narrative of Pseudo-Melito*, III, 1 (James, 210), *Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea*, 4 (James, 216), John of Thessalonica, *Dormitio Virginis Mariae*, 3, (*PO*, 19, 378), Germanus of Constantinople, *In dormitionem Beatae Mariae*, III, (*PG* 98, 364C) and Simeon Metaphrastes, *Oratio de B.V. Maria*, 38 (*PG* 115, 557B).

5 Germanus of Constantinople (see n. 63): Ἦν δὲ τὸ βραβεῖον, φοίνικος κλάδος, σύμβολον νίκης κατὰ θανάτου καὶ ζωῆς ἀμαράντου προεκτύπωμα. For the *palma victoriae* see also *Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei*, 21 (De Santos Otero, 234): *An nescitis quia palma haec, quam feci transferri in paradiso, parata erit omnibus sanctis in loco deliciarum?*

and tore palm branches from the trees.[1] But there are also other elements involved forming distinct parallels with the Coptic phoenix story: like the phoenix, Mary dies on scented branches and aromatics from Paradise, and in addition she is buried with them. The customary aromatics, however costly they may be, are evidently not sufficient at the death of Mary and of the phoenix; only branches and aromatics from Paradise can suffice for their glory. This once again brings out the supernatural character of the phoenix. We shall see in due course that a parallelism can also be demonstrated between the food of Mary and that of the phoenix in the Coptic literature.[2]

It is unlikely that Theodosius was inspired by a tradition concerning the phoenix with respect to the three branches from Paradise, but the reverse is quite impossible, since the sermon with the phoenix passage dates from a time in which the *Transitus Mariae* apocrypha were not yet in existence.[3] It therefore seems most probable that the theme of the three branches from Paradise is ultimately to be traced to a Christian book on Adam. In the typologically oriented symbolism of the early Christians there were many connections and points of agreement between Adam, Mary, and the phoenix that could easily have led to corresponding forms of the stories woven about them. This must also have been the case for the three branches from Paradise. For Adam as well as for Mary and the phoenix, they indicate a special mercy of the triune God. For the dying Adam, they are a sign that God will nullify death and that the gates of Paradise will finally open again: the wood of sin will become, as the cross of Christ, the wood of mercy. For the dying Mary, the divine garments and the palm branches from Paradise are an indication that she will gloriously enter the heavenly Jerusalem just as her Son once entered the earthly Jerusalem over earthly garments and palm branches. The three palm branches and the three olive branches given her by Christ in addition are the seal of her victory and God's protection of her, permitting her to enter the

[1] *Matt.* xxi.8; *Mark.* xi.8; *Luke* xix.36; *John* xii.13 (here only palm branches): Germanus too refers to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in connection with the palm branch for Mary.

[2] See p. 347.

[3] See p. 39.

heavenly Paradise immediately and in her own body. For the dying phoenix, which is a type of Christ, the three branches it has brought from Paradise to our world are a promise that it will arise in new glory after its death: it will know the direct, bodily resurrection promised to Adam for the future and bestowed on Mary as a special grace.

All this make it probable that the view of the third redactor of the *Physiologus*, that the phoenix makes three journeys to Paradise for the scented wood and aromatics,[1] is a corruption of the tradition that the phoenix took three branches from there. It is certain that the Coptic preacher must have taken some details about the phoenix from the *Physiologus*,[2] but clearly not from the third recension, for which a much later date is given than the one we have assigned to the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*.[3] The details in this sermon must have been drawn from a text located chronologically between the second and third recensions of the *Physiologus*: on the one hand it is assumed, as in the second, that the phoenix lives in Lebanon,[4] but on the other it is assumed, as in the third, that it obtains its aromatics from Paradise. This shows that the flight to Paradise must have existed long before the third recension. The redactor presents this detail in a form that is less appropriate than the one we find in the Coptic sermon and that we may therefore qualify as a secondary variant.

Almost all the versions of the *Physiologus* say that the phoenix goes from Lebanon or Paradise to Heliopolis in Egypt to cremate itself there. Only a few texts give a different story. According to the *Arabic Physiologus*, the phoenix does go to Lebanon before its death, and carries away from there all kinds of aromatic herbs and flowers that grow there, but it then flies back to India. The local priest then builds an altar for the bird on a high mountain, laying on it a nest of vine tendrils; the phoenix arrives with all its flowers,

[1] See p. 172, n. 3.

[2] See p. 215, 307.

[3] For the dating of the *Sermon on Mary*, see p. 40; the second and third recensions of the *Physiologus* have been dated by Sbordone in *ca.* A.D. 500 and *ca.* 1000, whereas B. E. Perry, *Physiologus*, in *RE*, 20, 1, 1941, 1114 puts them in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, respectively.

[4] See p. 172, n. 2.

settles on the nest, is consumed by fire, and lives again.[1] This priest occurs in all the versions of the *Physiologus*, the vine tendrils only in the first recension of it.[2] The return to India and the building of an altar on a high mountain must, however, derive from another source. The *Physiologus of Vienna* also offers a divergent story. This text, the strangest and most confused ever written on the phoenix, mentions Heliopolis but places it in the vicinity of Cadiz, outside our world, close to the *Oceanus*. The implication seems to be that this is the permanent abode of the bird. Somewhere near this Heliopolis the phoenix brings together on a very high rock all kinds of wood, upon which it burns itself at dawn.[3] The name Heliopolis and the burning and resurrection may have been taken from the *Physiologus*, but the rest must have been drawn by the writer from another source.

According to these texts, the phoenix burns itself up not on the altar in the Egyptian Heliopolis but on a high mountain or rock. The same is also found in other texts. Dionysius of Philadelphia says that when the phoenix feels itself grown old, it collects dry twigs on a high rock and makes itself a pyre for death or a nest for life.[4] He does not mention aromatic branches explicitly, but he may have had them in mind. Pseudo-Eustathius says that when the phoenix is ready to die it seeks out a high place in the East and there makes a nest of dry scented branches on which it burns itself.[5] Pseudo-

[1] *Arabic Physiologus*, 6: ... *et redit in Indiam; ... Tunc sacerdos illius regionis huic avi aram extruit in monte excelse, super qua ara ponit ex vitis palmitibus (structam) casae speciem. Advenit illi avis flores varios portans et casam illam intrat.* Probably, the word rendered by Land as *casa* corresponds to the Greek καλιά *cf.* Liddell-Scott, 867, s.v. καλιά.

[2] See also p. 198.

[3] *Physiologus of Vienna*, 16-19: Ζῆν δὲ τὸν φοίνικα αἰῶνα ὅλον, καὶ ἡνίκα πληρώσῃ τὸν αἰῶνα, φέρειν ξύλα πάμπολλα καὶ στοιβάζειν ἐπὶ πέτραν ὑψηλὴν λίαν ἐν τοῖς μέρεσιν Ἡλιουπόλεως, ἐπὶ τὰ Γάδειρα, ἔξω τοῦ κόσμου, πλησίον τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ.

[4] Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32 (continuation of quote on p. 161, in n. 3): ἐφ᾽ ὑψηλῆς πέτρας κάρφη συλλέξας πυράν τινα τῆς τελευτῆς ἢ καλιὰν συντίθησι τῆς ζωῆς.

[5] Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaemeron* (*PG* 18, 732A): καὶ ἐν καιρῷ τοῦ μέλλειν αὐτὸ τελευτᾶν (προαισθάνεται γὰρ τὴν ἀποβίωσιν), ἐφ᾽ ὑψηλοῦ τινος τόπου ἐστοχασμένος, κατὰ τὴν ἀνατολὴν τοῦ ἡλίου, ἐξ ἀρωματικῶν φρυγάνων συμπηγνύναι τὴν καλιάν.

Augustine, like Dionysius, speaks only of dry wood without further particularization, collected by the bird in "very hot" regions to which it has flown.[1] Possibly, this author too had high places in mind. This is apparently the case for John Lydus, who places the burning in upper India.[2] Granted that these last two texts are rather vague, in the *Carmen in laudem Solis* it is clearly stated that the phoenix burns itself on a rock.[3] Sidonius too assumes that the bird's pyre lies on a peak in India, to which he adds something that we shall later encounter more than once: when the phoenix brings the cinnamon for the pyre to this mountain it sets all the ordinary birds in motion, the subservient throng races toward the phoenix and the air becomes too small to allow their wings sufficient space.[4] Lastly, mention must be made of a version of the *Physiologus* preserved in the monestary of St. Catharine on Mt Sinai, in which it is said that as the hour of its death approaches, the phoenix collects from the four corners of the world a piece of every food and of all the good and bad kinds of wood and builds its nest on a high tower, where it then burns itself in an unusual manner.[5]

From the texts cited above it is evident that there must have been a tradition according to which the phoenix took new life on a high place—a rock, a mountain, a hill, or a tower, which must be no more than a variant of the others. This tradition seems to have ori-

[1] Pseudo-Augustine, *Ad fratres in eremo XVIII: de invidia cavenda* (*PL* 40, 1264): *dum senescit ad partes calidissimas volat, ligna siccissima congregat.*

[2] Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11: εἰς τινα τόπον τῆς ἄνω Ἰνδίας κατιέναι.

[3] *Carmen in Laudem Solis*, 36: *rupe sedet, capitur radiis.*

[4] Sidonius, *Carmina*, VII, 353-356: *sic cinnama busto / collis Erytraei portans Phoebeius ales / concitat omne avium vulgus; famulantia currunt / agmina, et angustus pennas non explicat aer.* It is usually assumed that the birds escort the phoenix after it has risen from the dead, see p. 193 and 227; Sidonius' view is certainly secondary. For *Erythraea* as India see e.g. W. B. Anderson, *Sidonius poems and letters*, I, London (Loeb), 1936, 46-47, n. 4.

[5] *Appendix Physiologi*, 25: ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ καιρὸς παρελθεῖν αὐτόν, ἄρχεται συνάγειν ἀπὸ παντὸς ἐδέσματος καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς ξύλου καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων γονιῶν τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ κτίζει τὴν καλλιὰν αὐτοῦ ἐπάνω πύργου ὑψηλοῦ. For the cremation, see p. 206. According to the Bodleian version of Mandeville's *Travels* (ed. Letts, 438), this takes place on the highest mountain in Arabia, which shows a distinct agreement with *App. Physiologi*, 25; see p. 207.

ginated from an erroneous interpretation of certain representations of the phoenix known in the ancient world, and which can be traced to a type that developed in Egypt. We shall see below that in the syncretism of Roman Egypt the Egyptian *benu* became identified with the Classical phoenix: the *benu* on the liturgical garment from Saqqara closely resembles the phoenix on a number of gems and on coins of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.[1] The Saqqara *benu*-phoenix is represented on a hill,[2] of which there is no trace on the coins of Hadrian and Antonius Pius. But the hill is seen again when at a later time the phoenix was shown alone on coins. This was the case under Constans I (337-350) and Constantius II (337-361), who ruled in the West and East, respectively. The phoenix was shown standing on a pyramid-shaped group of rocks.[3] Later, in the second half of the fifth century, an unusually talented mosaicist in Daphne, near Antioch, showed the phoenix in the same way, standing on a pile of rocks arranged in the form of a pyramid.[4] In this connection mention must also be made of the phoenix in the mosaic on the dome of the baptistry of S. Giovanni in Fonte at Naples, dating from the beginning of the fifth century. The elevation on which the bird is shown standing has been explained in various ways: as rocks, as flames, and as a nest.[5] This confusion has arisen because the phoenix is posed not on top of the elevation but with its feet in a depression at its centre. The most likely explanation seems to be, however, that the craftsman intended to show the phoenix on a rocky hill, like the one on the coins and on the mosaic in Daphne, but that lack of space forced him to this somewhat remarkable composition.

None of these representations contains any suggestion of a pyre or of the aromatics that the texts say the bird brings to the high place. Nor does the phoenix have the appearance of a decrepit bird on the point of death. Quite to the contrary, they show a radiant,

[1] See p. 243-246.
[2] See pl. III.
[3] See pl. VIII, 7, 8.
[4] See pl. XXXI.
[5] See pl. XXIII. For a review of the literature on the elevation on which the phoenix stands, see J.-L. Maier, *Le Baptistère de Naples et ses Mosaïques. Étude historique et iconographique*, (Paradosis, XIX), Fribourg (Switzerland), 1964, 28, n. 7.

glorious phoenix as it could only be imagined to appear immediately after its resurrecton. The hill or rock on which it is shown must have a deeper meaning than it has in the texts under discussion, i.e. a depiction of the place where the bird burns itself and is renewed. Only in an Egyptian context, as on the Saqqara garment, does the hill on which the phoenix stands have a clearly demonstrable meaning: it is the primeval hill that was the first thing to emerge from the waters of chaos when Atum created the world, and on which the *benu* settled radiantly. The *benu* of the Saqqara garment may be considered the expression of a very old view of the origin of the world and the commencement of life.[1] It has been assumed that the representations on the garment are related to the renewal of the Sothic period in A.D. 139.[2] If this is correct, the *benu*-phoenix indicates the repetition—connected with this cosmic renewal—of the primeval event of the creation and of the return of the Golden Age.[3]

The *benu*-phoenix on the hill associated with the creation must have become known in the Classical world via Roman Egypt. But the hill was too strongly an Egyptian image to be clearly understood as such in the Graeco-Roman world. The result was that it could easily be omitted without greatly affecting the symbolism of the original representation. The latter was never entirely forgotten, however, for we have seen it return in the fourth and fifth centuries on coins and certainly in one mosaic. It is nevertheless possible that at that time a different interpretation of the hill was current. We shall duly discuss in detail the conception that the phoenix has its abode on the Jewish-Christian Paradise mountain.[4] It is conceivable that via this idea the old image acquired a new meaning: the Egyptian creation hill was seen as the Christian Paradise mountain. This meant almost no modification of the meaning of this representation. The coins of Constans I and Constantius II carry the legend *FEL. TEMP. REPARATIO*, thus referring to the restoration of the Golden Age, with its paradisial state, at the assumption of power of these emperors.[5]

1 See also the discussion of the Egyptian conceptions on p. 15-17.
2 Perdrizet, *La tunique*, 110-113.
3 See also p. 105.
4 See also p. 311-324.
5 On this point, no Christian influence on Constantine and his sons can

It is clear that the hill on which the phoenix stands derived ultimately from an independent complex of ideas of which the phoenix could serve as the symbolic expression. This explains why the phoenix, when shown on a hill or a pyramid-shaped pile of rocks, does not suggest senility in any way. But such representations must have given rise to the literary tradition that the bird burned itself on a high place.

Lactantius gives a description of the place where the phoenix renews itself that is not found in any other author and can only be explained as a combination of several divergent traditions. He says that when it reaches the end of its life the bird leaves its sacred abode and travels "to this world, where death rules".[1] It has often been pointed out that the idea of two worlds occurs in other writings of Lactantius and that this constitutes evidence of Lactantius' authorship of *De ave Phoenice*.[2] It is not wise, however, to overrate the importance of this evidence, because the idea that death dominates in "this world" is not only universally Christian but also occurs frequently in Platonic and Stoic philosophy.[3]

According to Lactantius, the phoenix goes to Syria, which owes its old name of Phoenicia to the bird. Traversing lonely deserts, it

yet be discerned, *cf.* P. Monceau, *La lêgende du Phênix chez Eusèbe,* in *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de la France,* 1905, 171-172.

[1] Lactantius, 61-64: *ut reparet lapsum spatiis vergentibus aevum, / adsuetum nemoris dulce cubile fugit. / Cumque renascendi studio loca sancta reliquit, / tunc petit hunc orbem, mors ubi regna tenet.*

[2] H. Dechent, *Über die Echtheit des Phönix von Lactantius,* in *RhMPh,* N.F. 35, 1880, 50, pointed to Lactantius' *Epitome,* 22, 4: *Deus eiecit ergo peccatorem de sancto loco et in hunc orbem relegavit,* and his *Institutiones,* II, 9, 5-6; *cf.* also Fitzpatrick, 73, and Rapisardi, 29, 57-59. For a critical discussion of the comparative method applied by Dechent (and many others), see S. Brandt, *Zum Phoenix des Lactantius,* in *RhMPh,* N.F. 47, 1892, 397.

[3] See, as early as the New Testament, Paul's and John's ideas on "this world", *cf.* R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments,* 2nd ed. Tübingen, 1954, 249-255, 361-372; C. Pascal, *Sul carme "De ave phoenice" attribuito a Lattanzio,* in *Rendiconto della R. Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle arti,* NS, 18, Naples, 1904, 225-226, and *idem, Letteratura latina medievale,* Catania, 1909, 11, referring to Cicero, *Rep.* VI, 14: *ibi vivunt qui e corporum vinculis tamquam e carcere evolaverunt; vestra vero quae dicitur vita, mors est.* But Rapisardi nevertheless sees so many points of agreement between *Epitome,* 22 and *De ave phoenice* that he thinks the latter must also have been written by Lactantius (p. 58-59).

comes to distant forests where an isolated grove lies hidden in a ravine. There it chooses a palm whose crown reaches high into the air; the Greek name for this tree is also derived from name of the bird.[1] The mention of Syria and the palm tree was determined by even older speculations on the homonymy in Greek of phoenix, Phoenician, and palm.[2] Ovid is the only other writer in whom we find it said that the phoenix builds its nest in a palm, although there is no indication that the tree owes its name to the bird.[3] In early Christian art the phoenix was often shown on a palm-tree, but these are always representations of the heavenly Paradise, both the phoenix and the palm being symbols of the triumph of Life over death,[4] and have nothing to do with a phoenix on the point of renewing its life, as in Lactantius and Ovid. The latter is first encountered in illustrated medieval books.[5]

One of the most striking features of Lactantius' version is that the fortunate conditions of the paradisial abode of the phoenix recur on a small scale at the place of its death: no dangerous animal, no gliding snake, and no predatory bird can approach the nest holding the phoenix. Nature makes sure that the circumstances are the most favourable possible for its renewal: Aeolus shuts the winds up in his vaulted caves to prevent their motion from stirring the clear air or so that no cloud collected by the South wind can intercept the rays of the sun in the empty spaces of the heavens and thus interfere with the burning of the phoenix. In the palm-tree, under these conditions, the bird builds a nest, or perhaps rather a tomb, since it dies to live: it begets itself. In the lonely forest it collects the rare

[1] Lactantius, 65-70: *Dirigit in Syriam celeres longaeva volatus, / Phoenices nomen cui dedit ipsa vetus, / secretosque petit deserta per avia lucos, / sicubi per saltus silva remota latet. / Tum legit aerio sublimem vertice palmam, / quae Graium phoenix ex ave nomen habet.*

[2] See p. 51-57.

[3] Ovid., *Metam.* XV, 396-397: *ilicet in ramis tremulaeque cacumine palmae / unguibus et puro nidum sibi construit ore.*

[4] See pl. XX; XXIV-XXX; XXXV; XXXVI, 4. Later, the phoenix on the palmtree became a traditional datum, as exemplified by the representation on the triumphal arch in the church of *St. Maria in Trastevere* at Rome; see pl. XXXIX. In this mosaic the phoenix is a symbol of the virginity of Mary and of the virgin birth of Christ; the same symbolism in Rufinus, *Expos. Symb.*, 9.

[5] See below, p. 186.

aromatics already discussed, after which its resurrection begins.[1] In Claudian too, nature is involved in the death and renewal of the phoenix, and he too says that in the region where this place is located no animals can enter, in this case sick animals.[2] But according to Claudian, the phoenix dies where it has always lived. One is led to wonder whether Lactantius did not take his details on the absence of dangerous animals and the cooperation of Aeolus from a tradition in which the phoenix died in its original abode. The sick animals of Claudian and the dangerous animals of Lactantius are basically related, because in the perfect abode of the phoenix there is no sickness or death, enmity or violence. We shall discuss Lactantius' detailed descriptions of this abode below, where we shall see that he clearly betrays the influence of the Judaeo-Christian paradise images.[3] The Christian background also explains why Lactantius could not avoid having the phoenix travel to "this world": in Paradise there is no room for even its momentary death.

Gregory of Tours, to the contrary, gave the place where the phoenix renews itself the features of Paradise. He says that after 1,000 years the bird goes to a place lying higher than any other in the world. The trees are always green there, and at their centre is an abundant, clear spring beside which stands a tree that reaches above all the other trees in the forest. In its top the phoenix makes itself a nest or a grave of many kinds of spices.[4] Gregory explicitly refers to Lactantius, but his entire report on the phoenix shows clearly that he did not have the text of *De ave phoenice* at hand and must have cited it from memory. His descriptions of the place where the phoe-

[1] Lactantius, 71-78, *in quam (sc. palmam) nulla nocens animans prorepere possit, / lubricus aut serpens aut avis ulla rapax. / Tum ventos claudit pendentibus Aeolus antris, / ne violent flabris aera purpureum / neu concreta Noto nubes per inania caeli / submoveat radios solis et obsit avi. / Construit inde sibi seu nidum sive sepulchrum: / nam perit, ut vivat, se tamen ipsa creat.*

[2] See p. 333.

[3] See p. 311-332.

[4] Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, 12: *Haec postquam mille transierit annos, petit locum omnibus locis mundanis celsitudinem praeminentem, in quo habetur locus viridi comam verno hibernoque perdurans, in cuius medium fons est magnus et ubertate profluus et lenitate praeclarus. Huius in litore arbor nobilis reliquas luci arbores proceritate praecellens, in huius arboris vertice haec avis de diversis pigmentorum generibus construit sibi seu nidum sive sepulchrum.*

nix takes new life can be seen as an abbreviated version of Lactantius' description of the permanent abode of the phoenix.[1] The single tree reaching above all the other trees and in which the phoenix builds its nest, may well be his memory of the high palm tree in the forest in Syria mentioned by Lactantius. It is also possible, and even more probable, that Gregory simply had in mind Paradise, which according to the universal Christian conception was located on a high mountain and with a spring at its centre in the shadow of the Tree of Life.[2] In any case, it can be inferred that Gregory meant Paradise for both the perfect abode in which according to Lactantius the phoenix lived and also the place in which it died.

The confusion of these two places, i.e. where Lactantius had the bird live and die, had in Gregory the result that this author allowed the actions of the phoenix in these places to coincide. According to Lactantius, in its perfect abode the phoenix sings to the sun and plunges repeatedly into the waters of the spring.[3] Gregory has it do this just before its death, and makes the assumption that the bird leaves its nest for this express purpose, emerging from under the aromatics with which it has already covered itself.[4] It is hard to avoid the impression that he simply wished to include a mention of the singing and the diving, even though this was not really the appropriate place to do so: in Lactantius the cover of aromatics is arranged just before the death of the phoenix.[5] Gregory's view, i.e. that the phoenix renews itself in Paradise, recurs in the Middle Ages in Thomas of Cantimpré and, depending on him, in Albertus Magnus.[6]

[1] See p. 311.
[2] See p. 315.
[3] See p. 282-284.
[4] Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, 12: *insedensque in medio eius ore odoramenta adtrahit seque ex his tegit. Tunc diversis modolis incipit cantos effundere suaves, ac de nido exiliens, aquarum se undis inmergit. Quod cum ter quaterque repetierit, ascendit iterum super nidum adtrahitque denuo super se odoramenta, quae detulit.*
[5] See p. 170.
[6] Thomas of Cantimpré, *De naturis rerum*, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XVII, 74: *in altissimis orientis partibus in arbore pulcerrima super amenissimum fontem posita altare quasi nidum instruit ex thure, mirra et cinnamomo ac ceteris aromatibus;* Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42): almost identical with emission of "*in altissimis orientis partibus*".

It is not certain, however, whether there is any question of a direct influence of Gregory of Tours.

The various traditions of the preparations of the phoenix for its death found no expression in Classical and Early Christian art. Not until the Middle Ages do we see the first representations of the collecting of the aromatics, in *Bestiaries* in Cambridge, Vienna, and Klagenfurt.[1] On a choir-stall in the Cologne cathedral the phoenix is shown using its beak to adjust the wood of its pyre, which has already caught fire.[2] In the *Bestiary* in Vienna a picture of the same event shows the bird burning itself on a steep rock; and in what is called *Queen Mary's Psalter* in the British Museum this event takes place on a hill.[3] Thus, the idea that the phoenix burns itself on a hill or rock, which we have explained as originating from poorly understood representations of the phoenix, is not found expressed until the book illustrations of the Middle Ages. There we also find the images conveyed by Ovid, Lactantius, and later authors, i.e. that the bird built its nest in the branches of a tree: it is shown doing this in a picture in a missal kept at Stammheim, and in the so-called *Psalter of Queen Isabella* the already burning nest is shown resting on a branch.[4]

3. The Genesis from the Decaying Remains of the Predecessor

According to a number of texts, the phoenix, realizing that the end of its life is approaching, places itself on its nest of scented woods, dies, and begins to decompose. The way in which the young bird originates is indicated in detail by most of the authors: the decaying

[1] M. R. James, *The bestiary*, ... Oxford, 1928, pl. fol. 36ro.; O. E. Sounders, *English illumination*, Florence-Paris, 1928, pl. 51b; *Illustrierte Handschriften in Oesterreich*, VIII, 2, Vienna, 1926, pl. XL, 2; Landesmuseum, Klagenfurt, VI, 19, fol. 100vo (Index of Christian Art, Princeton, no. 096940).

[2] See B. von Tieschowitz, *Das Chorgestühl des kölner Domes*, Marburg, 1930, pl. 67b.

[3] G. Warner, *Queen Mary's Psalter*, London, 1912, pl. 153.

[4] The missal is in the Fürstenberg collection in Stammheim (Bildarchiv no. 75944, Index of Christian Art, no. 067509); the psalter in the Stadtsbibliothek, Munich, gall. 16, fol. 60ro (Index of Christian Art, no. 042212).

remains of the old bird give rise to a worm which develops wings and grows into the new phoenix. According to Manilius, the worm emerges from the bones and marrow of the dead bird.[1] Clement of Rome has the worm originate from the decaying flesh and then live on the body fluids until it develops wings.[2] Cyril of Jerusalem mentions only the decaying flesh, Ambrose only the fluid.[3] Tzetzes states that the young phoenix develops from the worm under the influence of the heat of the sun.[4] He is the only author to have the sun play a role in this form of origin; we shall see that the same motif occurs, in the other main version, in the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*.[5]

Experience had taught the Classical world that maggots appear in decaying flesh. This wonder was seen as a form of spontaneous generation.[6] Moisture and heat were considered to be almost indispensable factors for the induction and early phases of such generation.[7] One of the many animals considered to originate in a spontaneous way was the bee.[8] It is therefore hardly surprising that Cyril of Jerusalem, after describing the origin of the phoenix, refers

[1] Pliny, X, 4: *Ex ossibus deinde et medullis eius nasci primo ceu vermiculum, inde fieri pullum.*

[2] *I Clement*, 25, 3: σηπομένης δὲ τῆς σαρκὸς σκώληξ τις ἐγγεννᾶται, ὃς ἐκ τῆς ἰκμάδος τοῦ τετελευτηκότος ζώου ἀνατρεφόμενος πτεροφυεῖ.

[3] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B): Εἶτα, ἐκ τῆς σαπείσης σαρκὸς τοῦ τελευτήσαντος, σκώληξ τις γεννᾶται· καὶ οὗτος αὐξηθεὶς εἰς ὄρνεον μορφοῦται. Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59: *Ex cuius umore oriri vermem paulatimque eum in avis eiusdem figuram concrescere usumque formari;* idem, *Exameron*, V, 23, 79: *de cuius umore carnis vermis exsurgit paulatimque adolescit ac processu statuti temporis induit alarum remigia atque in superioris avis speciem formamque reparatur.*

[4] Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 391-392: Ἐπὰν δὲ θάνη, γίνεται σκώληξ ἐκ τούτου πάλιν, / ὁ φοῖνιξ πάλιν γίνεται, θαλπόμενος ἡλίῳ.

[5] See p. 214.

[6] See W. Rodemer, *Die Lehre von der Urzeugung bei den Griechen und Römern*, Thesis Giessen, 1928, where, on p. 40-41, many references to texts are given. W. Capelle, *Das Problem der Urzeugung bei Aristoteles und Theophrast und in der Folgezeit*, in *RhMPh*, 98, 1955, 150-180.

[7] *Cf.* Capelle, *Urzeugung*, 163-169.

[8] See Rodemer, 21-22, on the various ways in which the bee was thought to originate (for the phoenix: p. 25, and several places on p. 39, nos. 449-461); Capelle, *Urzeugung*, 156-158, also F. Olck, *Biene*, in *RE*, 3, 1899, 432-435 and L. Koep, *Biene*, in *RAC*, II, 1954, 276, 280. The ancient Egyptians already had the same conception concerning the scarab; see Bonnet, 720.

the incredulous reader to the example of the bees.[1] Rufinus too mentions the phoenix and the bee together as examples of asexual procreation.[2] Aeneas of Gaza wonders in astonishment why Theophrastus cannot believe in the resurrection of the human body when he believes unhesitatingly that innumerable bees originate from a single dead bull, that the phoenix lives again after dying and completely decaying, and that many other animals are born from putrefaction.[3] Aeneas does not mention the intermediate stage of the worm, but it is clear that he assumed it. The same is the case for other writers: Ovid mentions only that the young phoenix emerges from the dead body of the old bird, but Lactantius Placidus adds, as implicit correction, the putrefaction fluid.[4]

The extent to which the origin of the young phoenix was seen as an act of self-generation is clearly shown by the words of Pomponius Mela: due to coagulation of the fluid of the decomposing members, the phoenix impregnates itself and is born of itself.[5] Tacitus has a very original version of this: the phoenix impregnates the nest, and the semen gives rise to a young bird.[6] This has been seen as a rationalization of the myth of the origin of the phoenix,[7] but there is a much more probable explanation available. Although Taci-

[1] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B): μὴ ἀπιστήσῃς δὲ τούτῳ· καὶ γὰρ τὰ μελισσῶν γεννήματα οὕτω βλέπεις ἐκ τῶν σκωλήκων μορφούμενα.

[2] Rufinus, *Expositio Symboli*, 9 (after the phoenix, see p. 357): *Apes certe nescire coniugia, nec fetus nexibus edere omnibus palam est.* The Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 28-32, gives the same food for the bee and the phoenix; see the translation on p. 47 and below on p. 340.

[3] Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, (*PG* 85, 980A): ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς φθορὰ καὶ σῆψις μυρίων μελισσῶν γένεσις καὶ ζωὴ καὶ βίος ἐγένετο. καὶ τὸ ὄρνεον ὁ φοῖνιξ εἰς πεντακόσια ἔτη βιῶναι λέγεται· τελευτήσας δὲ καὶ ὅλως διαχυθείς, αὖθις ἀνεβίωσε.

[4] Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 400-402: ... *finitque in odoribus aevum. / Inde ferunt, totidem qui vivere debeat annos, / corpore de patrio parvum phoenica renasci.* Lactantius Placidus, *Narr. fab. Ovidianarum*, XV, 37: *ex cuius sanie alia renascitur.*

[5] Pomponius Mela, III, 84: *dein putrescentium membrorum tabe concrescens ipse se concipit atque ex se rursus renascitur.*

[6] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *suis in terris struere nidum eique vim genitalem adfundere, ex qua fetum oriri.*

[7] M. Schuster, *Der Phönix und der Phönixmythos in der Dichtung des Lactantius*, in *Commentationes Vindobonenses*, 2, 1936, 69, sees in Tacitus "*bereits den Versuch einer rationalistischen Kompromiszlösung ... die das Wunderhafte der Phönixnatur der Naturmässigkeit näher zu bringen bestrebt ist*".

tus does not explicitly say so, the next part of his report implies that the old bird has died in the nest it has made. It seems justified to assume that the semen is to be identified with the fluid that flows from its decomposing body and in which, according to the texts cited above, the renewal of the phoenix begins. That the semen is susceptible to this interpretation is shown by Ambrose's report: after telling of the origin from the body fluids, the Church Father says, a little further on, that the Creator willed that this bird reproduces itself from its own seed.[1] A tradition related to the idea of the coagulation of the decomposition fluid as point of origin of the new phoenix, is that of the bird *ḥôl* (phoenix) as transmitted in the school of Rabbi Judan, the son of Rabbi Simeon: after a thousand years the old bird begins to decompose and its wings fall off; this continues until only an egg-sized remnant is left; on this new wings begin to grow and the bird attains a new life.[2]

When the young phoenix has regained its old strength, its first care is to render its predecessor the last honours in a fitting way.[3] The most common version was that it brought its father to Heliopolis in Egypt and placed the remains on the altar there. But this connection between the phoenix and Egypt is not found in the oldest text giving this version. According to Manilius, whose report of the phoenix is preserved in Pliny, the young bird carries the remains of its predecessor to the temple of the sun near Panchaia, where it lays its burden on the altar.[4] The choice of Panchaia—so often favoured

[1] Ambrose, *Exaemeron,* V, 23, 79: ... *auctor et creator avium ..., qui avem unicam perire non passus resurgentem eam sui semine voluit propagari.*

[2] *Bereshit Rabbah,* XIX, 5 (trans. H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis,* I, London, 1951, 152): "*R. Judan b. R. Simeon said: It lives a thousand years, at the end of which its body is consumed and its wings drop off, yet as much as an egg is left, whereupon it grows new limbs and lives again*".

[3] Ovid, *Metam.,* XV, 405, in this context calls the bird *pius;* Pliny, X, 4: *principioque iusta funera priori reddere;* Tacitus, *Ann.,* VI, 28: *et primam adulto curam sepeliendi patris;* Ambrose, *De exc. fratris,* II, 59: ... *subnixam quoque remigio pennarum renovatae vitae officia munere pietatis ordiri.* Speaking of the piety of brute animals, Celsus referred to the phoenix which comes to the temple of the sun to bury its dead father; Origen, *Contra Celsum,* IV, 98: Ἔτι δὲ ὡς ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων ἱστάμενος ὁ Κέλσος παραλαμβάνει τὸ Ἀράβιον ζῷον, τὸν φοίνικα.

[4] Pliny, X, 4: *et totum deferre nidum prope Panchaiam in Solis urbem et in ara ibi deponere.*

in legends—is not surprising;[1] more remarkable is Ambrose's statement that the young phoenix carries its dead father from Ethiopia to Lycaonia. It seems certain that a misunderstanding was involved here.[2]

Ovid mentions only the city and the temple of Hyperion, but there is no evidence to show that he did not have Heliopolis in Egypt in mind.[3] The old phoenix is transported in the fragrant nest in which it died: according to Ovid, the young bird carries "its own cradle and the grave of its father" and according to Ambrose "the grave of the dead body or the cradle of the resurrected one, in which it succumbing died and dying rose again".[4] Pomponius Mela and Tacitus give a very different story of the transportation of the dead phoenix, the one found much earlier in Herodotus.

Herodotus says nothing at all about the death of the old phoenix and the origin of the new one; besides describing the appearance of the bird he remarks only that he does not believe the story told him by his informants, according to which every 500 years a phoenix carries the body of its father in an egg of myrrh from Arabia to the temple of the sun in Egypt to bury it there.[5] This story is also found in Celsus and Achilles Tatius. The bird follows a certain procedure, according to Herodotus: first it takes myrrh and makes an egg so heavy that it can just barely carry it; after having made sure it can carry it, it hollows out the egg, places its dead father in it, and closes

[1] For Panchaia, see K. Ziegler, *Panchaia*, in *RE*, 18, 3, 1949, 493-495.

[2] Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59: *nam thecam illam, vel tumulum corporis vel incunabulum resurgentis, in qua deficiens occidit et occidens resurrexit, ex Aethiopia in Lycaoniam vehit.* See also p. 306, n. 5.

[3] Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 403-407: *Cum dedit huic aetas vires onerique ferendo est, / ponderibus nidi ramos levat arboris altae, / fertque pius cunasque suas patriumque sepulcrum, / perque levis auras Hyperionis urbe potitus / ante fores sacras Hyperionis aede reponit.* Lactantius Placidus, *Narr. fab. Ovidianarum*, XV, 37, summarizes these verses as follows: *et viribus roborata nidum in urbem effert Solis ibique in templo eius monumentum patris reponit.*

[4] See texts in n. 2 and 3 above and also *1 Clement* 25, 3: εἶτα γενναῖος γενόμενος αἴρει τὸν σηκὸν ἐκεῖνον ὅπου τὰ ὀστᾶ τοῦ προγεγονότος ἐστίν, καὶ ταῦτα βαστάζων διανύει ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀραβικῆς χώρας ἕως τῆς Αἰγύπτου εἰς τὴν λεγομένην Ἡλιούπολιν.

[5] Herodotus, II, 73, 3: τοῦτον δὲ λέγουσι μηχανᾶσθαι τάδε, ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες, ἐξ Ἀραβίης ὁρμώμενον ἐς τὸ ἱρὸν τοῦ Ἡλίου κομίζειν τὸν πατέρα ἐν σμύρνῃ ἐμπλάσσοντα καὶ θάπτειν ἐν τοῦ Ἡλίου τῷ ἱρῷ.

the opening with myrrh, after which the egg has the same weight as before it was hollowed out. The phoenix then brings it to the temple of the sun in Egypt.[1] Achilles Tatius does not speak of the flight to test the weight of the ball of myrrh, but otherwise his report agrees almost completely with that of Herodotus.[2] The account given by Celsus is briefer than those of Herodotus and Achilles Tatius.[3]

It is quite clear that Pomponius Mela's account was based on the tradition in Herodotus, Celsus, and Achilles Tatius: when the young bird reaches maturity, it carries the bones of its previous body sealed in myrrh to Egypt.[4] The version given by Tacitus is only apparently different: the young phoenix carries out the funeral of its father "not heedlessly, but after first lifting a quantity of myrrh and attempting to carry it over a long distance until it has found the weight and the distance equal to the burden to be carried and the distance to be travelled, it then takes up the body of its father and brings it to the altar of the sun and burns it there.[5] According to Tacitus, thus, the phoenix practices for some time with a

[1] Herodotus, II, 73, 4: κομίζειν δὲ οὕτω· πρῶτον τῆς σμύρνης ᾠὸν πλάσσειν ὅσον [τε] δυνατός ἐστι φέρειν, μετὰ δὲ πειρᾶσθαι αὐτὸ φορέοντα, ἐπεὰν δὲ ἀποπειρηθῇ, οὕτω δὴ κοιλήναντα τὸ ᾠὸν τὸν πατέρα ἐς αὐτὸ ἐντιθέναι, σμύρνῃ δὲ ἄλλῃ ἐμπλάσσειν τοῦτο καὶ ὅ τι τοῦ ᾠοῦ ἐκκοιλήνας ἐνέθηκε τὸν πατέρα, ἐγκειμένου δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς γίνεσθαι τὠυτὸ βάρος, ἐμπλάσσαντα δὲ κομίζειν μιν ἐπ' Αἰγύπτου ἐς τοῦ Ἡλίου τὸ ἱρόν.

[2] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 4-5: Σμύρνης γὰρ βῶλον τῆς εὐωδεστάτης, ὅσον ἱκανὸν πρὸς ὄρνιθος ταφήν, ὀρύττει τε τῷ στόματι καὶ κοιλαίνει κατὰ μέσον, καὶ τὸ ὄρυγμα θήκη γίνεται τῷ νεκρῷ. Ἐνθεὶς δὲ καὶ ἐναρμόσας τὸν ὄριν τῇ σορῷ καὶ κλείσας τὸ χάρμα γηίνῳ χώματι ἐπὶ τὸν Νεῖλον οὕτως ἵπταται τὸ ἔργον φέρων.

[3] Celsus, in Origen, *Contra Cels.* IV, 98: καὶ φέρον ἀποθανόντα τὸν πατέρα καὶ ταφέντα ἐν σφαίρᾳ σμύρνης καὶ ἐπιτιθὲν ὅπου τὸ τοῦ Ἡλίου τέμενος. Nothing in the Classical sources justifies the remarkable view that the egg of myrrh brought by the young phoenix to Heliopolis contains the germ of new life for the old phoenix, as in R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike*, Munich-Berlin, 1962, 130, and, *Isisfeste in griechisch-römischer Zeit*, (Beitr. z. klass. Philologie, 5), Meisenheim am Glan, 1963, 31 and E. Köberlein, *Caligula und die ägyptischen Kulte*, (Beitr. z. klass. Philologie, 3), Meisenheim am Glan, 1962, 18. The new phoenix goes only to pay the last honours to its predecessor, as is clear from the reports on the cremation or mummification of the old bird; see below, p. 196-198.

[4] Pomponius Mela, III, 84: *cum adolevit, ossa pristini corporis inclusa murra Aegyptum exportat.*

[5] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *neque id temere, sed sublato murrae pondere temptatoque per longum iter, ubi par oneri, par meatui sit, subire patrium corpus inque Solis aram perferre atque adolere.*

quantity of myrrh until it is capable of carrying the body of its father from Arabia to Egypt. He says nothing about the placing of the body in a capsule of myrrh, which could lead to the inference that he followed an independent tradition. But in fact he has only given an abbreviated and therefore distorted form of the tradition of Herodotus. Of the various preparations made by the young phoenix for its flight to Egypt according to Herodotus, only the experimental flights with the myrrh survive in Tacitus. For both the origin of the young phoenix and the transportation of the old one to Egypt, Tacitus' data can be reconciled with the current ideas of the version of the phoenix myth under discussion here, but it must be admitted that his version of what is really the core of the myth is unclear, confused, and confusing.[1]

It is evident from the foregoing that in the authors following the version of the genesis of the phoenix from the remains of its predecessor, two conceptions concerning the transportation of the dead phoenix to Egypt can be distinguished: according to one, the most popular, this occurred in the fragrant nest in which the old bird had died, but according to the other, it was in a ball of myrrh. The latter story, transmitted by Mela in the pure form and by Tacitus in a distorted form, proved to agree with a tradition we find in Herodotus, Celsus, and Achilles Tatius. The latter writers do not refer to the way in which the genesis of the young phoenix occurred, but the agreement we have found makes it probable that they too assumed that the bird took life from the decomposing body of its predecessor. The same must hold for Artemidorus and Aelian, who also speak of the transportation to Egypt of the dead phoenix by the young one without referring to the manner of its genesis.[2] We shall

[1] Hubaux and Leroy, 163, think that for his details on the flight of the young phoenix Tacitus "*n'est pas tributaire d'Hérodote*", but is dependent on "*traditions authentiquement égyptiennes évoquant le bennu "patrophore"* ". Here they follow the untenable elucidation given by Sbordone to *Book of the Dead*, 64, 21; see above, p. 30. On the basis of this assumed agreement, they go extensively into the *subire patrium corpus* of Tacitus, followed by interesting but for the phoenix rather irrelevant considerations concerning the "*oiseau-porteur*" (p. 163-177).

[2] For Artemidorus, see above, p. 151, and for Aelian, p. 194, n. 2, and p. 196, n. 3.

return to this point in some detail in the discussion of the development of the phoenix myth.[1]

Various authors say that on its flight to Egypt the young phoenix was accompanied by an escort of birds, an idea expressing the royal character of the phoenix. We have already seen that Sidonius, who follows the fire version, described the old bird on its last flight as being accompanied by many birds.[2] We shall see later that this ceremonious escort is also reported for the first flight of the young phoenix after its resurrection from the ashes of its predecessor.[3] This theme is first found in Ezekiel the Dramatist, but without any mention of how he visualized the genesis of the new phoenix. He says that it is clearly evident that the phoenix is the king of all the birds, because they follow it with reverential awe.[4] Tacitus says that on its flight to Egypt the phoenix is accompanied by a large escort of birds, which admire its new appearance.[5] Achilles Tatius says that when it travels to Egypt the phoenix resembles a king on a journey in a foreign country, because a choir of birds follows it as its body-guard.[6] Striking parallels with this frequently mentioned motif of the phoenix myth are to be found in the panegyrics on the assumption of power by a new ruler. We have already shown that the importance of a change of rule was often enhanced by making it the occasion for an appearance of the phoenix, and it seems certain that the congregating of the birds to admire the new phoenix, to honour it, and to follow it ceremoniously, was borrowed from the traditional descriptions of the events surrounding the inauguration of a new ruler.[7]

Achilles Tatius adds to his report on the flight of the new phoenix,

[1] See below, p. 404-408.

[2] See p. 179.

[3] See p. 227-228.

[4] Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 265-269: βασιλεὺς δὲ πάντων ὀρνέων ἐφαίνετο, / ὡς ἦν νοῆσαι. πάντα γὰρ τὰ πτήν' ὁμοῦ / ὄπισθεν αὐτοῦ δειλιῶντ' ἐπέσσυτο, / αὐτὸς δὲ πρόσθεν, ταῦρος ὡς γαυρούμενος. / ἔβαινε κραιπνὸν βῆμα βαστάζων ποδός. For the last two verses, see p. 258.

[5] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *in civitatem cui Heliopolis nomen advolavisse, multo ceterarum volucrum comitatu novam faciem mirantium.*

[6] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 5: Ἕπεται δὲ αὐτῷ χορὸς ἄλλων ὀρνίθων ὥσπερ δορυφόρων καὶ ἔοικεν ὁ ὄρνις ἀποδημοῦντι βασιλεῖ.

[7] See also below, p. 228-229.

that the bird has no uncertainty about the exact location of Heliopolis.[1] This completely certain knowledge possessed naturally by each phoenix before its first flight to Egypt is the main theme of Aelian's remarks on the phoenix. He expresses his surprise that the bird knows exactly when 500 years of its life have passed and what direction it must take to reach Egypt and Heliopolis. Aelian finds this wisdom more remarkable than, for instance, the political activity and martial exploits of man.[2]

The young phoenix lays its burden on the altar in the temple of the sun at Heliopolis.[3] Clement of Rome says, quite explicitly, that this occurs in the daytime, with many onlookers.[4] For Clement the phoenix was evidence of the possibility of the final resurrection, and he may have deliberately inserted the public aspect of the phoenix's arrival for apologetic reasons, although in its application he did not give it special attention. Cyril of Jerusalem, who depended on Clement, later understood the apologetic value of this aspect so well that he ended by creating his own variant of the phoenix myth to exploit it.[5] According to him, the genesis of the new phoenix from the decomposing body of its predecessor took place not somewhere outside Egypt but in Heliopolis itself, where it was visible to all. The words he uses to introduce the resurrection of the bird clearly betray the motive underlying this change: in its 500th year the bird comes to Egypt and demonstrates resurrection; it does not do this in a solitary place to conceal the mystery, but openly in a city so that the wonder can be examined.[6] Because Cyril placed the renewal of the phoenix in Heliopolis, he was forced to discard the young

[1] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 5: καὶ τὴν πόλιν οὐ πλανᾶται τὴν Ἡλίου.

[2] Aelian, VI, 58: ἐκεῖνα δέ, ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, οὐ σοφὰ εἰδέναι ποῦ μὲν Αἴγυπτος ἐστι, ποῦ δὲ καὶ Ἡλίου πόλις, ἔνθα αὐτῷ πέπρωται ἥκειν, καὶ ὅπου ποτὲ τὸν πατέρα καταθέσθαι χρὴ καὶ ἐν θήκαις τίσι; ταῦτα δὲ εἰ μὴ δοκεῖ θαυμαστά, ἆρα γε τὰ ἀγοραῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνοπλία καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐς ἀλλήλους τε καὶ κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐπιβουλὰς ἐροῦμεν σοφά;

[3] See p. 189, n. 4; 190, n. 3; 191, n. 5; n. 4 below; 196, n. 4.

[4] *1 Clement*, 25, 4: καὶ ἡμέρας, βλεπόντων πάντων, ἐπιπτὰς ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ ἡλίου βωμὸν τίθησιν αὐτά, καὶ οὕτως εἰς τοὐπίσω ἀφορμᾷ.

[5] See p. 158.

[6] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B): δείκνυσι τὴν ἀνάστασιν· οὐκ ἐν ἐρημοῖς τόποις, ἵνα μὴ ἀγνοηθῇ τὸ μυστήριον· ἀλλ' ἐν φανερᾷ πόλει παραγενόμενον, ἵνα ψηλαφηθῇ τὸ ἀπιστούμενον.

bird's journey with the body of its father. Thus, according to his account, immediately after acquiring wings the new phoenix returns to its native country, emphasis being placed on the fact that it is the exact equivalent of its dead predecessor.[1]

Only a few writers refer to the reactions of the Heliopolitan priests to the appearance of the young phoenix. Clement of Rome says that they consult the annals and find that the bird had arrived after 500 years had elapsed.[2] Although Clement does not say so explicitly, the impression is obtained that the intention of this reference to the annals was made to determine whether that phoenix was really the true one: it was known that the bird came to Egypt every 500 years, so they had only to verify whether that many years had passed since the bird had appeared.[3] This investigation of the authenticity of the newly arrived phoenix is described in detail by Achilles Tatius: the bird settles on a high point and awaits the servants of the god; a priest comes out of the temple with a book and compares the phoenix with an illustration to see whether it is the real one. But the phoenix knows that there are doubts, and it therefore allows the priest to look upon the secret parts of its body, i.e. its genitals, then shows its dead father, and proves to be, as it were, a gifted funeral orator. The servants of the god then take the dead bird of the sun and bury it.[4] It remains possible that Achilles Tatius inserted these

[1] *Ibid.* (1025C): Ἐῖτα, πτεροφυήσας ὁ προειρήμενος φοῖνιξ, καὶ τέλειος, οἷος ἦν ὁ προτερος, φοῖνιξ γενόμενος· ἀνίπταται τοιοῦτος εἰς ἀέρα οἷος καὶ ἐτετελευτήκει.

[2] *1 Clement*, 25, 5: οἱ οὖν ἱερεῖς ἐπισκέπτονται τὰς ἀναγραφὰς τῶν χρόνων, καὶ εὑρίσκουσιν αὐτὸν πεντακοσιοστοῦ ἔτους πεπληρωμένου ἐληλυθέναι.

[3] For true and false phoenixes, see p. 113-116.

[4] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 6-7: Ἕστηκεν οὖν ἐπὶ μετεώρου σκοπῶν καὶ ἐκδέχεται τοὺς προπόλους τοῦ θεοῦ. Ἔρχεται δή τις ἱερεὺς Αἰγύπτιος, βιβλίον ἐξ ἀδύτων φέρων, καὶ δοκιμάζει τὸν ὄρνιν ἐκ τῆς γραφῆς. Ὁ δὲ οἶδεν ἀπιστούμενος καὶ τὰ ἀπόρρητα φαίνει τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὸν νεκρὸν ἐπιδείκνυται καὶ ἔστιν ἐπιτάφιος σοφιστής. Ἱερέων δὲ παῖδες Ἡλίου τὸν ὄρνιν τὸν νεκρὸν παραλαβόντες θάπτουσι. E. Vilborg, *Achilles Tatius, Leucippe and Clitophon. A commentary*, (Studia graeca et latina Gothoburgensia, XV), Gothenburg, 1962, 79, takes ἐπιτάφιος σοφιστής literally and points out that "*other writers report that the phoenix has a beautiful voice*" (for this, see p. 200) but it seems much more likely that these words pertain to the previous mentioned demonstration of the genuineness of the phoenix and its father, as supposed by T. F. Carney, *Achilles Tatius, Leucippe and Clitophon, Book III*, The Classical Association of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, (1960), 180.

details on his own initiative, but it is also conceivable that he borrowed them from stories about the *benu*-phoenix that were current in the Egyptian syncretism of his time. Reference must be made here to certain magical amulets on which the *benu*, which was identified with the phoenix, is represented as standing on a round object lying on an altar or the back of a crocodile and which can be explained as the egg of myrrh containing the old phoenix.[1] If this interpretation is correct, it is evident that the arrival of the phoenix in Heliopolis played a role in the syncretistic reflections on the *benu*-phoenix encountered in Roman Egypt.

But ordinarily the phoenix did not have to prove its authenticity, and the converse is seen in that its appearance was taken as an indication that a period of 500 years had elapsed. According to Ambrose, for instance, the resurrection of the phoenix showed the inhabitants of its native country that a period of 500 years had again come to an end.[2] Aelian even denies the Egyptian priests any possibility of verifying the authenticity of the phoenix, because of the inaccuracy of their calculations. He portrays the priests in uncertainty as to whether the 500 years of the phoenix have been fulfilled: according to some the bird is still to come, according to others it should have arrived long before. But while they are futilely arguing, a divine inspiration makes it clear to the bird that the time has come, and it appears.[3] The object of Aelian's argument is to show that natural intuitive knowledge is characterized by an exact certainty not endowed by the laborious calculations of the scholars. There can be little doubt that it was for this purpose that he deliberately introduced the embarrassing lack of certainty of the Egyptian priests into the story of the phoenix.

Pomponius Mela and Tacitus state explicitly that the old phoenix is consumed by fire on the altar on which it is placed.[4] Since this

[1] See our pl. XI, 1-3; also below, p. 243-244.

[2] Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59: *Atque ita resurrectione avis huius locorum incolae conpletum quingentorum annorum tempus intellegunt.*

[3] Aelian, VI, 58: οἱ μὲν ἐρεσχελοῦσι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐρίζοντες ὡς οὐ νῦν ἀλλ' ἐς ὕστερον ὅδε ὁ θεῖος ὄρνις ἀφίξεται ἢ ὡς ἐχρῆν ἥκειν· ὁ δὲ ἄλλως ἐκείνων ἐριζόντων ἀποσημαίνεται δαιμονίως τὸν καιρὸν καὶ πάρεστιν.

[4] Pomponius Mela, III, 84 (continuation of citation on p. 191, in n. 4): *et in urbe quam Solis adpellant flagrantibus arae bustis inferens memorando funere consecrat;* Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *patrium corpus ... adolere.*

was the usual funeral practice in the Classical world, we may assume that it was meant by most of the authors who followed the version of the phoenix myth under discussion.[1] It is possible that Achilles Tatius, who, as we have seen, gives an independent version of the events in Heliopolis, had the Egyptian practices in mind. They are explicitly mentioned by Horapollo, but like that of Achilles Tatius his report is almost completely independent of the Classical traditions concerning the phoenix.

Horapollo's version of the genesis of the young phoenix and the death of the old one has already been discussed: just before its death the phoenix inflicts a wound on itself by falling to the ground, and the fluid emerging from this wound gives rise to another phoenix which, as soon as it can fly, travels together with its father to Egypt where the old phoenix dies at dawn. While the Egyptian priests bury the old bird, the young phoenix returns to its native country.[2] Many of the elements of this story are found in other phoenix traditions: according to a few texts, the phoenix allows itself to drop from a great height in order to set its nest of aromatics afire;[3] the fluid from the wound is reminiscent of the above-mentioned putrefaction fluid; the death of the old phoenix at dawn occurs in the fire version as well;[4] and the journey of the old and the young phoenix together has a weak parallel in the Arabian traditions concerning the bird

[1] This may certainly be assumed for the authors who say that the old phoenix is placed on the altar (Ovid, Pliny, Clement of Rome). When Herodotus and Artemidorus, for instance, speak of burial, (θάπτειν, καταθάπτειν) this does not exclude the possibility of a prior cremation; see Liddell-Scott, 784, *s.v.;* Tacitus also speaks of *sepeliendi* (p. 189, n. 3), and it later becomes apparent that with this he had cremation in mind. For the Classical burial customs, see Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, 387-390 and e.g. H. J. Rose, *Dead, Disposal of*, in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1949, repr. 1953, 255-256.

[2] Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, II, 57: ὅταν μέλλῃ τελευτᾶν ὁ φοῖνιξ, ῥήσσει ἑαυτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ὀπὴν ἐκ τοῦ ῥήγματος λαμβάνει, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἰχῶρος τοῦ καταρρέοντος διὰ τῆς ὀπῆς ἄλλος γεννᾶται· οὗτος τε ἅμα τῷ πτεροφυῆσαι, σὺν τῷ πατρὶ πορεύεται εἰς τὴν Ἡλιούπολιν τὴν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, καὶ παραγενόμενος ἐκεῖσε, ἅμα τῇ ἡλίου ἀνατολῇ, ἐκεῖ τελευτᾷ· καὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ νεοσσὸς πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα ἄπεισιν, οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς τῆς Αἰγύπτου τοῦτον τὸν ἀποθανόντα φοίνικα θάπτουσι.

[3] See p. 206-207.

[4] See p. 203, 205.

called *'anka'*, according to which the young bird is already present before one of its parents burns itself.[1]

Both Achilles Tatius and Horapollo report that the priests of Heliopolis buried the old phoenix. According to the latter, this was done according to ancient Egyptian practice: the Egyptians were obliged to bury the phoenix in the manner used for the burial of the other sacred animals.[2] He must therefore have assumed that the old phoenix, like, for instance, the cat and the crocodile, was mummified.

4. The Genesis from the Ashes of the Predecessor

The burning of the phoenix and the resurrection from its ashes is described in detail by several authors. We have already seen that according to many texts the phoenix travels to Heliopolis in Egypt before it is consumed by fire,[3] but the only one to give the priests a role at the arrival of the bird is the *Physiologus*, in which the phoenix sends the priest a sign, at which he immediately places vine tendrils on the altar; the phoenix then comes with its aromatics to Heliopolis and places itself on the altar.[4] Like Aelian,[5] thus, the *Physiologus* assumes that the priest of Heliopolis does not know exactly when the phoenix will appear; the bird itself gives the sign announcing its coming. How the phoenix sends this sign from Lebanon and what it consists of is not mentioned. As judged by later versions, this point remained a problem. The *Physiologus* of Ansileubus, for instance, and the related report of Petrus Damiani, mention only "certain indications" by which the priest can tell that

[1] See p. 207.

[2] Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, I, 35: κηδεύεται μυστικῶς, καὶ ὅσα ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἱερῶν ζῴων Αἰγύπτου τελοῦσι, ταῦτα καὶ τῷ φοίνικι ὑπάρχειν ὀφείλει.

[3] See p. 147, where other locations of the cremation are given.

[4] *Physiologus*, 7: καὶ σημαίνει τῷ ἱερεῖ τῆς Ἡλιουπόλεως τῷ μηνὶ τῷ νέῳ τῷ Νησὰν ἢ τῷ Ἀδάρ, τουτέστι τῷ Φαμενὼθ ἢ τῷ Φαρμουθί (see for this chronological indication p. 131). Ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς σημανθεὶς ἔρχεται, καὶ ἐμπιπλᾷ τὸν βωμὸν ἀμπελίνων ξύλων· τὸ δὲ πετεινὸν εἰσέρχεται εἰς Ἡλιούπολιν, γεγομωμένον τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καὶ ἀναβαίνει ἐπὶ τὸν βωμόν.

[5] See p. 194.

the phoenix is approaching.[1] According to the *Byzantine Physiologus*, the priest himself gives the sign, at which the phoenix leaves its abode to go to the priest, enters the temple, and settles on the altar.[2] In the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil* there is no longer any mention of the sign. Only in the oldest version and in the highly divergent Arabic translation is there any mention of the vine tendrils the priest lays on the altar in readiness.[3] Their symbolic meaning is clear: in the East, the grape vines and the grapes growing on them had from ancient times been symbols of life and immortality.[4] In the later versions it is only said that the priest placed twigs on the altar; only the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil* has him—"because he knows the nature of the phoenix"—place burning coals on the altar.[5]

Like Clement of Rome and Cyril of Jerusalem, the *Didascalia* stresses the fact that just because it is such a rare phenomenon, the phoenix makes a deep impression when it enters Egypt.[6] It is also in this book that we first encounter the report that before setting itself afire the phoenix faces the East and the rising sun, and then

[1] Ansileubus, *Fragmenta e Physiologo in glossario inserta*, 12: *et quibusdam indiciis significatur hoc sacerdoti civitatis Heliopoleos*. Petrus Damiani, *Opuscula varia*, LII, 11: *Hoc itaque sacerdos civitatis Heliopoleos quibusdam significationum indiciis deprehendit.*

[2] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: καὶ ὅταν σημαίνῃ ὁ ἱερεὺς τῆς Ἡλιουπόλεως, εὐθέως ἐγείρεται αὐτὸς ὁ φοῖνιξ ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου τόπου, καὶ ἀπέρχεται πρὸς τὸν ἱερέα [τῆς Ἡλιουπόλεως] καὶ εἰσέρχεται ἐν τῷ ναῷ, καὶ καθέζεται ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου.

[3] See above, and the *Arabic Physiologus*, ed. Land, 155 (trans.): *super qua para ponit ex vitis palmitibus (structam) casae speciem.*

[4] See M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1953, 247-249. In the Jewish and the Christian symbolism, the grape vine and the Tree of Life were identified with each other, *cf.* J. Daniélou, *La vigne et l'Arbre de Vie*, in his *Les symbols chrétiens primitifs*, Paris, 1961, 33-48 (also in *Mélanges Hugo Rahner*, Paris, 1961).

[5] *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*, 21: καὶ ἀπέρχεται ἐν τῷ ναῷ Αἰγύπτου. Γνωρίζων δὲ ὁ ἱερεὺς τὴν φύσιν τοῦ φοίνικος, ποιεῖ αὐτῷ ἀνθρακιὰν ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ, καὶ εἰσέρχεται ὁ φοῖνιξ καὶ καίεται μετὰ τῶν εὐόσμων ξύλων. *Cf.* also *Appendix Physiologi*, 4.

[6] *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 40: *Nam si esset par aut multi, ipsi multi velut fantasma videri poterant homines: nunc autem videtur, cum ingrediatur, quia solum est.* The Syriac translation omits "*aut multi*" and "*velut fantasma*", see Connolly, 173. According to the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 20-21, the phoenix comes "*flying in the height*" (see trans. on p. 45).

utters a prayer.[1] The writer of the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, which adopted the *Didascalia* almost word for word, leaves this point to those who have written on the phoenix.[2] Michael Glycas, who betrays the influence of the *Constitutiones*, says only that the phoenix faces the sun, without mentioning a prayer.[3] But there is a reference to the prayer in the *Physiologus of Vienna*: the phoenix flies to the pyre and settles on it, spreads its wings upward, stares toward the East as though it were praying in some manner, and awaits the appearance of the sun.[4] Thus, the phoenix assumes the attitude of prayer of the early Christians: hands raised and turned to face the East where at the end of time Christ, the Sun of Justice, will appear.[5]

The texts do not tell the content of this prayer, but its aim is undoubtedly to entreat the sun to bring about the burning and therefore the renewal. This is quite evident from the *Phoenix* of Claudian, in which the phoenix's prayer and the response of the sun god have become a highly elaborated scene. The poet seems to have united two separate elements: the greeting of the rising sun by the phoenix and the prayer concerning the conflagration. The former is found in Lactantius and in a group of texts in which the phoenix is portrayed as the daily attendant of the sun,[6] the second in the texts just mentioned. Claudian says that the phoenix sinks onto its nest and greets the sun with a sweet sound, but also adds its supplications and in a submissive strain pleads for the fire that will give it new

[1] *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 40: *et orat contra orientem.*

[2] *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, V, 7, 15: καὶ στὰν πρὸς ἀνατολάς, ὡς αὐτοί φασιν, τῷ ἡλίῳ προσευξάμενον.

[3] Michael Glycas, *Annales*, I, (*PG* 158, 108C): καὶ ἀντικρὺ τοῦ ἡλίου ἵσταται, εἶτα τεφροῦται. It is possible that Glycas meant only that to set itself afire the phoenix exposed itself to the rays of the sun.

[4] *Physiologus of Vienna*, 18-20: καὶ ἵπτασθαι ἐπάνω τῶν ξύλων τὸν φοίνικα, τὰς πτέρυγας ἡπλωμένον ὄρθια καὶ κατὰ ἀνατολὴν τηροῦντα, ὥσπερ τινὰ τρόπον εὐχόμενον καὶ ἐκδεχόμενον τὴν τοῦ ἡλίου ἔξοδον.

[5] F. J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, (Liturgiegesch. Forsch., 4/5), Munster, 1925, 319 and 323 for a possible Christian background, and *passim*.

[6] Lactantius, *De ave phoenice*, 44-50, see also p. 283. Hubaux and Leroy, 148-150, 159-160, adhere to the view that the bird's song about which Lactantius speaks must also be considered to occur immediately before its death; for this reason they placed verses 35-54 after verse 90, as had been done earlier by M. Leroy, *Le chant du Phénix. L'ordre des vers dans le Carmen De ave phoenice*, in *AC*, 1, 1932, 213-231. This is rejected on good grounds by Walla, 141-147.

strength. When Phoebus has seen the phoenix from a great distance he reins in his horses, comes to a sharp halt, and consoles his foster-child by saying: O thou who art to lay thy old age on the pyre and shall take a new birth from what seems to be thy grave, thou who art periodically reborn from thy decline and who extracts youthful strength from thy death, receive a new commencement of life and desert thy withered body; reappear, after thy transformation, renewed.[1]

The singing of the phoenix just before its death has also been interpreted in another way. Philostratus says that the Indians supplement the well-known story by saying that, like the dying swan, the phoenix sings its own dirge as it is consumed in its nest.[2] The mention of "the Indians" seems to imply that Philostratus is here following a typically Eastern tradition. It is true that Gregory of Tours also mentions the singing of the phoenix just before its death, but only because he was careless in the use of certain information taken from his source, Lactantius.[3] The only true parallel for the report of Philostratus is found in the Persian poet Attar, who lived in the twelfth century. Attar says that the phoenix has a very long and hard beak perforated like a flute, through which it can make such beautiful music that all other animals become silent. When its death approaches, it makes sad mournful sounds; many birds and other animals come to look at it, but many of them cannot bear the sight and die.[4]

[1] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 45-54: *Hic sedet et Solem blando clangore salutat / debilior miscetque preces ac supplice cantu / praestatura novas vires incendia poscit. / Quem procul adductis vidit cum Phoebus habenis, / stat subito dictisque pium solatur alumnum: / "O senium positure rogo falsisque sepulchris, / natales habiture vices, qui saepe renasci / exitio proprioque soles pubescere leto, / accipe principium rursus corpusque coactum / desere. Mutata melior procede figura!"* See also Zeno of Verona on p. 204, in n. 6.

[2] Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, III, 49: προσᾄδοντες τῷ λόγῳ τὸ τὸν φοίνικα τὸν ἐν τῇ καλιᾷ τηκόμενον προπεμπτηρίους ὕμνους αὑτῷ ᾄδειν. Τουτὶ δὲ καὶ τοὺς κύκνους φασι δρᾶν οἱ σοφώτερον αὐτῶν ἀκούοντες. *Cf.* the scholion ed. by G. J. Bekker (Heidelberg, 1818, 119): καὶ τοὺς κύκνους φασὶ προπεμπτηρίους τῷ φοίνικι ᾄδειν.

[3] Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, 12: *Tunc diversis modolis incipit cantos effundere suaves;* see also p. 185.

[4] Attar, *The conference of birds*, 26 (trans. Nott, 66-67). Many data given by Attar are also given in the dubious reports cited by the sixteenth century humanists to prove that the phoenix could not be a completely fabulous

The phoenix, solitary in life and in death, sings its own lamentations and dirges, according to this version, just as in Lactantius it strews itself with fragrant herbs for its own funeral.[1] It is quite possible that these two versions of the singing of the phoenix before its death arose independently.

The *Didascalia* and the *Constitutiones Apostolorum* say that after its prayer the phoenix takes fire spontaneously, burns, and becomes ash.[2] Claudian also speaks of this spontaneous burning, but at the same time makes clear how this is to be understood: the bird is struck by a ray of sunlight. This last of the great Roman poets makes a vivid picture of this scene; after concluding the words just cited, the sun god shakes his head and strikes the phoenix with one of his golden locks, which the poet calls a life-giving dart of lightning. At this, the bird takes fire to be reborn: longing for its rebirth, it is glad to die. The fragrant nest blazes under the ray hurled from heaven, and consumes the old body.[3]

animal. Hieronymus Cardanus, *De subtilitate libri XXI, nunc demum recogniti atque perfecti*, Basiliae, 1554, 337 says that among the Indians there occurs the bird *semenda* whose life greatly resembles that of the phoenix: the *semenda* has a remarkable beak with three holes, before its death it sings like the swan (see n. 2), it collects twigs and sets them afire by beating with its wings, from its ashes a worm emerges from which the new bird develops. With more restrictions the *semenda* is mentioned by Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Exotericarum exercitationum libri XV de subtilitate ad Hieronymum Cardanum*, Francofurti, 1601 (1st ed. 1557), 731, who refers to the reports of sailors: "*legimus in Commentariis navigationum*". Attar says: "*A philosopher once visited this bird and learnt from him the science of music*"; according to Scaliger, the shepherd's flute was constructed according to the example of the *semenda*'s beak: "*cuius ad imitationem pastores instrumentum composuerint haud insuave*". Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologia hoc est De avibus historiae libri XII*, (= *Opera omnia*, I). Bononiae, 1599, 817, says that in Venice he examined a bird taken to be the *semenda;* he concluded that the details in Cardanus were based on fantasy: see also p. 833 for the illustration of the beak of this bird: "*semendae cranii descriptio, sine tribus illis fistulis*". For the confusion in the Arabic literature between the phoenix and *semenda*-salamander, see also p. 207, n. 7.

1 See p. 170.

2 *Didascalia*, 40: *et succenditur a se ipso et comburitur et fit cinis;* Syriac translation, Connolly, 172: "*a fire is kindled of itself and burns him up, and he is reduced to ashes*", *Const. Apost.*, V, 7,15: αὐτομάτως φλεχθῆναι καὶ γενέσθαι κόνιν.

3 Claudian, *Phoenix*, 55-60: *Haec fatus propere flavis e crinibus unum / concussa cervice iacit missoque volentem / vitali fulgore ferit. Iam sponte crema-*

The lighting of the pyre by a ray from the sun is mentioned by several writers. Philostratus was probably referring to it when he said that there is only one phoenix that takes its genesis from the rays of the sun.[1] The burning of the bird is clearly ascribed to the heat of the sun by Dionysius, the *Carmen in laudem Solis,* and Pseudo-Eustathius, all three placing the event on a high rock.[2] Gregory of Tours diverges on this point from Lactantius, whose version we shall discuss below: in agreement with his source Gregory says that the phoenix covers itself with its fragrant herbs in its nest, but then says that it is struck at dawn by the first rays of the sun, at which the whole takes fire and burns up.[3] According to another tradition, the phoenix itself generates the fire by beating the scented wood and herbs of its nest with its wings. This version is found in Dracontius, who explicitly states that the aromatics burn *before* the phoenix, as well as in Pseudo-Augustine, in the Coptic *I Clement,* in a scholion on Lucan, in a few versions of the *Physiologus* including the Viennese, in which as in Gregory of Tours the conflagration occurs at dawn, and in the above-mentioned Persian poet Attar.[4] Although not all these texts actually say that the bird

tur / ut redeat gaudetque mori festinus in ortum. / Fervet odoratus telis caelestibus agger / consumitque senem.

[1] Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii,* III, 49: εἶναι δὲ ἕνα, ἐκδιδόμενον τῶν ἀκτίνων. *Cf.* the end of the description in Dionysius, *De aucupio,* I, 32: ὥστε ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλιακῆς μόνης αὐγῆς, πατρός τε καὶ μητρὸς χωρίς, τὸν ὄρνιν γίγνεσθαι τοῦτον.

[2] Dionysius, *De aucupio,* I, 32: ἣν (*sc.* πυράν/καλιάν) ...ἡ τῶν ἡλιακῶν ἀκτίνων καταφλέγει θερμότης; *Carmen in laudem Solis,* 36-37: *Rupe sedet, capitur radiis, et lumine Phoebi / suscipit inmissum recidiva morte calorem;* Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaemeron,* (*PG* 18, 732A): κἄπειτα ὑπὸ τῆς ἀκτῖνος ὁλοκαυτίζεσθαι τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ εἰς κόνιν παντελῶς ἀναλύεσθαι.

[3] Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio,* 12: *ascendit iterum* (*sc.* after the repeated submersion in the spring, see p. 185) *super nidum adtrahitque denuo super se odoramenta, quae detulit. Imicante autem sole primum ei iubar inferit ignem, adprehensumque nidum, tota integre concrematur.* On the covering of the nest with aromatics, see p. 185.

[4] Dracontius, *Romulea,* X, 107-109: *et verberat alas / ut flammas adsciscat avis (sic nascitur ignis / ante alitem ambrosios iam consumpturus odores);* Pseudo-Augustine, *Ad fratres in eremo sermo XVIII: de invidia cavenda* (*PL* 40, 1264): *ligna alis percutit et sic ignem accendit, et in eodem se comburi permittet;* Coptic *I Clement,* 25: *"It beats with its wings and burns up in the fire"; Schol. on Lucan,* VI, 680, no. 4: *plausuque alarum voluntarium sibi gignit incendium; Syriac Physiologus* (ed. Janssens, 64): *"il monte sur l'autel et s'y frotte jusqu'à ce qu'il en fasse sortir du feu, et se consume"; idem* in other

beats with its wings on its scented pyre, it is probable that this is what was understood. A slightly different version is offered by Epiphanius: the phoenix beats its breast violently with its wings and in this way brings forth fire from its own body, ignites its pyre, and is consumed by the fire, all its flesh and bones becoming ash.[1] Epiphanius uses here the word ταρσός, which can be taken in the sense of ταρσὸς ποδός, "sole of the foot" or as ταρσός πτερύγων, "spread wing".[2] In the light of the texts just mentioned, it is most likely, and also most logical, that Epiphanius meant that the phoenix struck itself with its wings.[3] We shall see that Epiphanius betrays an influence of the *Physiologus*.[4] He could have taken the word he uses for wing from this source; in any case its ambiguity explains the view found only in the *Byzantine Physiologus* that the phoenix ignites the fire with its feet. It is probable that here too ταρσοί in the sense of "spread wings" was originally involved.[5] In the oldest version of the *Physiologus* it is said only that the bird itself starts the fire, and this is also the case in Ambrose, Zeno of Verona, Pseudo-Bede, and in a Turkish tradition concerning the bird *Kerkes*-phoenix.[6] It is conceivable that in these texts too the *plausus alarum*

Syriac versions (Janssens, 68; Land, IV, 55, Ahrens, 52); *Arabic Physiologus*, (ed. Land, 155, trans.); *Deinde alas agitat adeo vehementer, ut ignem sibi extundat; Physiologus of Vienna*, 21-23: καὶ τοῦ ἡλίου ἐξερχομένου, ἄρχεσθαι ἀναπτερύσσεσθαι τὸν φοίνικα, καὶ τύπτειν ταῖς πτέρυξι τὰ ξύλα ..., καὶ εὐθέως ανάπτεσθαι τὰ ξύλα, καὶ καίεσθαι τὸν φοίνικα, καὶ γίνεσθαι σὺν τοῖς ξύλοις στακτὴν πολυπληθῆ; (στακτὴν: conjecture of Delatte, see Hubaux and Leroy, XXX, n. 2; Sbordone gives σακτὴν). Attar, *Conference of the birds*, trans. Nott, 67.

[1] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 4: καὶ ταρσοῖς ἰδίοις τὰ στήθη τὰ ἑαυτοῦ μαστίξας πολλά, πῦρ ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ προφερόμενος ἐμπίπρησι τὴν ὑποκειμένην ὕλην τῷ τόπῳ καὶ οὕτως ἑαυτὸν ὁλοκαυτοῖ καὶ πάσας τὰς σάρκας αὐτοῦ σὺν ὀστέοις ἐκτεφροῦται.

[2] See Liddell-Scott, 1759, s.v. ταρσός, II, 1 and 3.

[3] Rusch, 421, takes ταρσοῖς ἰδίοις as "*mit seinen Krallen*", but ταρσός cannot mean "claw", since it is "*the part between the toes and the heel*" (Liddell-Scott).

[4] See below, p. 215, 223.

[5] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: πῦρ δὲ ἀνάπτει ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ συγκαίει τὸν βωμὸν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου σὺν τῷ αὐτῷ ὀρνέῳ, καὶ πάντα σποδὸς γίνεται. The same view is found in Hubaux and Leroy, 158, n. 3.

[6] *Physiologus*, 7: καὶ αὐτὸ (*sc.* τὸ πετεινὸν) τὸ πῦρ ἀνάπτει καὶ ἑαυτὸν καίει. The same conception is found in the *Physiologus* of Ansileubus, 12: *ignem sibi ipse incendit;* Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, II, 59: *rogum sibi ipsa succendat;* Zeno of Verona, *Tractatus*, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 381A-B): *a semetipsa invitatis sacris ignibus libentissime concrematur* (this is also reminiscent of the prayer

was meant, and the same could hold for the view of the school of Rabbi Jannai that the *ḥôl*-phoenix is consumed by fire after a thousand years, when a flame shoots out of its nest.[1]

It is particularly in later authors that we find a combination of the motifs of the kindling of the fire by solar rays and by the beating wings. Isidore of Seville, followed by several medieval writers, says that the phoenix, facing toward the sun, voluntarily brings about the burning by beating itself with its wings.[2] Reinerus correctly took this to mean that the *plausus alarum* and the heat of the sun together brought about the fire.[3] Slightly different is the version in Pseudo-Jerome, who with a few variations of his own gives a number of details from the *Physiologus*: at sunrise the phoenix moves its wings, the heat of the sun ignites the amber placed by the bird among the aromatics on the altar, and in this way the scented wood burns up and the phoenix itself is set afire.[4] With this combination of the two methods of ignition it is never said that the phoenix beats the wood with its wings to start the fire, and this was also perhaps never assumed. Thomas of Cantimpré probably understood the meaning of the combined methods very well when he wrote that by beating with its wings the phoenix activated the terrible aureole of the sun against itself:[5] thus, the *plausus alarum* has the purpose

for the flames, as we have seen it in Claudian and in the *Didascalia* and the *Const. Apost.*, see p. 200 and 201); Pseudo-Bede, *Expositio in Jobum*, II, 12 (ad *Job*, xxix.18): *in ipso (sc. nido) post multa tempora a semetipsa dicitur concremari*. Kerkes: W. Ouseley, *The Oriental collections*, II, London, 1798, 64: *"she gathers pieces of wood in her bill, and kindling a flame, is consumed in the fire and becomes ashes"*.

[1] *Bereshit Rabbah*, XIX, 5 (trans. H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis*, I, London, 1951, 152): *"a fire issues from its nest and burns it up"*.

[2] Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XII, 7, 22: *et conversa ad radium solis alarum plausu voluntarium sibi incendium nutrit*. Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, 8, 6 (*PL* 111, 246B) and Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, I, 49 (*PL* 177, 48C). *Cf. Schol. on Lucan*, VI, 680, no. 4 on p. 203 in n. 4.

[3] Reinerus, *De ineptis cuiusdam idiotae libellus* (*MGH*, Scr. 20, 597): *plausuque alarum atque igneo solis radio usus, incendit se ipsum*.

[4] Pseudo-Jerome, *Epistola XVIII ad Praesidium*: *de cereo paschali* (*PL* 30, 187B): *Et primo solis ortu, phoenix quidem movet pennas, solis vero calore accenditur electrum et sic exuruntur aromata et ipse phoenix incenditur*. For amber, see p. 164, n. 1.

[5] Thomas of Cantimpré, *De naturis rerum*, (in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XVII, 74): *Tunc sevidos solis orbes alarum agitatione in se concitans super struem ruit*.

of directing the heat of the sun toward the phoenix.[1] This is also assumed by Theodoric and Honorius of Autun.[2] A similar view is also found among the Greeks in John of Gaza, who described the burning of the phoenix in extremely mannered verses: the bird, beating with its wings, places itself opposite the rising sun and, intending to steal a burning ray from the sun, it goes voluntarily to the death it has chosen; its body is reduced to ashes and it has found its welcome destiny.[3] Albertus Magnus, lastly, gives his own variant of the idea that the phoenix summons the heat of the sun against itself with its wings: the bird exposes itself to the burning rays of the sun and multiplies them by the flashing of its wings until a flame is kindled by which it is consumed and becomes ash.[4] In the foregoing we have encountered several times the story that the phoenix beat its wings at sunrise.[5] We shall see in due course that in the texts giving the phoenix as the companion of the sun this is an act with which the bird's earthly counterparts, the cocks, greet the rising sun.[6]

A few texts have the fire ignited by the phoenix itself in other ways. In the text from the monastery on Mt Sinai, published by Sbordone in his *Appendix Physiologi*, it is said that the phoenix makes its scented nest on a high tower, then flies high up into the air to let itself fall on this tower, the impact of its body striking the tower creating a flame that sets its nest afire.[7] We have already seen

[1] Hubaux and Leroy, 156-160; as a result of the already-mentioned rearrangement of verses 35-54 of Lactantius (see p. 200, n. 6), they have not only the singing of the phoenix but also the associated *plausus alarum* immediately precede the cremation, but see p. 210, n. 5 and p. 285, n. 1.

[2] Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 770-771: *Ab radiis solis tum flammas suscitat alis / sic nidum facit esse rogum demumque sepulchrum;* Honorius of Autun, *Speculum Ecclesiae, De paschali die* (*PL* 172, 936A): *percussisque alis ab ardore solis incenditur, in nido comburitur.*

[3] John of Gaza, *Descriptio tabulae mundi*, II, 215-218: ἀντολικοῦ δὲ / κινυμένων πτερύγων ἀντώπιος ἄνθορε δίσκου / καὶ φλογὸς ἁρπάζειν δεδοκημένος ἔμπυρον ὅρμην / ἐς μόρον αὐτὸς ἑκὼν αὐτάγρετον ἔδραμε φοῖνιξ / τεφρώσας πυρὶ γυῖα, καὶ ἡδέϊ κέκλιτο πότμωι.

[4] Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42): *et se radiis ferventibus solis obicit et illos resplendentia pennarum multiplicat donec ignis elicitur, et sic se cum nido incendit et incinerat.*

[5] See p. 203, n. 4; 205, n. 4; n. 3 above.

[6] See p. 262, 273, 275, 278, 291.

[7] *Appendix Physiologi*, 25: καὶ κτίζει τὴν καλλίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπάνω πύργου ὑψηλοῦ ... καὶ ἄρχεται πέτεσθαι ὑψηλά, καὶ κατέρχεσθαι αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕψους, καὶ

that this tower is only a variant of the more frequently mentioned high mountain or rock.[1] Even when it is not explicitly stated, what is meant is that the phoenix lets itself fall on its nest. The only true parallel for this is to be found in the Bodleian version of Mandeville's *Travels*: the bird flies as high as it can and then lets itself fall on the highest mountain of Arabia on which it has built its nest; the great heat this causes sets the nest afire, at which the phoenix places itself in the flames and is consumed.[2] We have already encountered the fall of the phoenix in Horapollo, albeit that this writer gives the motif an entirely different turn.[3]

The Arabian tradition concerning the bird *'anḳa'* says that this bird too loses its life by burning: Ḳazwînî recounts that the male and the female birds, when they have become old, collect wood and set it afire by rubbing their beaks together; at this, one of them is burnt alive, and the young *'anḳa'*, previously hatched, takes its place.[4] According to a Persian translation of the cosmography of Ḳazwînî, both birds are consumed by the fire and a new bird emerges from the ashes.[5] This version is clearly an adaptation to the Classical phoenix myth on which, in all likelihood, some version of the *Physiologus* exerted an influence.[6] Among the Arabians there was also some confusion of the stories about the phoenix with those about the salamander (*samand* or *samandal*), the latter being sometimes a four-footed animal and sometimes a bird.[7] A combination of the two is found in the *Commentary on Job* by the Syrian Ishô'dâdh, who has the phoenix arise from a fire kindled by the salamander:

κρούειν τὸν πύργον, ὥστε ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης τοῦ δόματος ἐπεξελθεῖν πῦρ, καὶ ἅπτει ἡ καλλία αὐτοῦ.

[1] See p. 179.

[2] Mandeville's *Travels*, ed. Letts, 438.

[3] See p. 197.

[4] A. J. Wensinck, *Tree and bird as cosmological symbols in Western Asia*, (Verhand. Kon. Acad. van Wetensch. te Amsterdam, afd. Letterkunde), Amsterdam, 1920, 40; also *Encyclopedia Brittanica*, 17, London, 1959, 770.

[5] Text and translation in Henrichsen, II, 21: *nec mas rostrum suum feminae rostro affricare cesset, donec ex hac utriusque frictione in illo ligno ignis accendatur, et flammas concipiat, quo uterque flagrat et in cinerem redigitur.*

[6] See p. 213.

[7] Many places on the salamander in the Arabic literature are given by S. Bochart, *Hierozoicum*, 4th ed., (*Opera omnia*, II), Lugd. Batav. et Traject. ad Rhen., 1712, 822. See also p. 201, n. 4.

the phoenix arrives in Egypt with cinnamon in its beak and perches on the altar; on this altar the bird salamander lays an egg it then rubs so hard that flames shoot out by which the phoenix is consumed.[1] It cannot be said with certainty whether this combination of Classical and Oriental elements was made by Ishô'dâdh himself. He was highly dependent on Theodore of Mopsuestia, who may have written about the phoenix in his now largely lost *Commentary on Job*.[2]

We have seen above that Claudian has the burning of the phoenix initiated by the intervention of the sun god himself. This personal interference of a deity is seldom mentioned in connection with the death of the phoenix. John Lydus, who assigns no role to the solar rays in the conflagration, says that the funeral pyre was kindled by the personal intervention of some deity.[3] Dracontius clearly means the Christian God when he says in his *De laudibus Dei* that God renews the faded youth of the phoenix by fire and that after being burnt, the bird reappears in the full strength of its maturity.[4] The intervention of God is also found in the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*: the phoenix is consumed by fire descending from the heavens.[5] We have already discussed the meaning of this.[6] It would be mistaken to think that Claudian, who has the phoenix struck by a "life-giving dart of lightning", must have known the tradition of the descending heavenly fire, since he was making use of a common image and meant the ray of the sun (one of his golden locks).[7]

According to some authors, the phoenix settles into the flames of

[1] Ishô'âdh, *Comm. on Job*, trans. Schliebitz, 80.

[2] See J. Quasten, *Patrology*, III, Utrecht-Antwerp-Westminster, 1960, 406.

[3] Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11: ἐπιβαίνειν τε τούτου (*sc.* θημῶνος)· οὗ δῆθεν ἐξαπτομένου ὑπό τινος αἰφνιδίου δαίμονος αὐτὸν μὲν ἀναλίσκεσθαι τῷ πυρὶ τὸν φοίνικα.

[4] Dracontius, *De laudibus Dei*, I, 653-655: *Phoenicis exactam renovat Deus igne iuventam / exustusque senex tumulo procedit adultus: / consumens dat membra rogus sine sorte sepulcri.*

[5] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 14, 24-25 (see trans. on p. 45, 47).

[6] See p. 119-121.

[7] Hubaux and Leroy, 146, are of the opinion that in Claudian Phoebus assumes the features of Jupiter and that the poet therefore meant a real stroke of lightning. But see *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, VI, 1515, s.v. *fulgor*, A, 1, a.

an already burning pyre. We have pointed out above that the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil* has the priest of Heliopolis place glowing coals on the altar instead of the usual twigs, on which the phoenix then settles and burns together with the scented branches it has brought from Paradise.[1] A related account is found in the *Ethiopic Physiologus*, which generally keeps rather strictly to the oldest version of the Greek text: the priest places grapevines on the altar, and when he ignites an offering of aromatics the phoenix arrives and burns itself.[2] According to the scholiast on Persius, in the medieval *Cornuti Commentum*,[3] the phoenix settles into the flames: the scented twigs collected by the bird are kindled by the heat of the sun; at sunset the phoenix allows itself to be burned by the fire and at sunrise it is reborn, with the sun.[4] Here a close parallel is drawn with the daily course of the sun, without saying that the bird renews its life every day. We shall see below that the latter is assumed in a number of other texts, although in them the heat of the sun plays a quite different role than in the texts under discussion.[5] According to the remarkable tradition in Alanus, the phoenix let itself be consumed by fire together with the first offering made in the Jewish temple at Leontopolis: when the priest had placed unleavened bread and many kinds of scented woods on the altar and lit the offering, the phoenix descended and was immediately turned to ashes in the fire.[6] As with the offering of Abel in the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, here too the phoenix burns itself on an altar not specially prepared for it: its arrival is not expected.[7]

In complete divergence from these traditions, Lactantius does not have the death of the phoenix caused by fire. He says that the bird takes aromatic herbs in its beak and places them on and around

[1] See p. 199, n. 5.

[2] *Ethiopic Physiologus*, 7 (ed. Hommel, 52).

[3] For this, see M. Schanz and C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, II, Munich, 1935, 482-483.

[4] *Schol.* on Persius, I, 46: *virgulas..., quae dicuntur solis ardore incendi, mox autem ut sol occiderit, se flammis imponit et cum sol oriri coeperit, de cineribus suis cum sole renascitur.*

[5] See p. 278.

[6] Alanus in Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, XII, 14: the text is given in n. 2 on p. 118.

[7] See p. 119.

its body in order to die at its own funeral; surrounded by all these scents it gives up the ghost, full of confidence in such a rich funeral.[1] Thus, the phoenix dies a natural death on its fragrant nest. We have seen that on this point Gregory of Tours diverges from Lactantius: although the phoenix covers itself with the aromatics, it is struck at sunrise by the first rays and dies by fire.[2] The covering of aromatic herbs occurs further only in the *Physiologus* of Ansileubus, but there it is said that the phoenix lights the fire itself.[3] Since nothing else in this text indicates any familiarity with Lactantius or Gregory, it is hardly likely that the covering with aromatics was borrowed from these writers. Nor is it necessary to assume the converse, i.e. that they borrowed from a given version of the *Physiologus*, since it was common practice to strew aromatic herbs over the body before the funeral or cremation.[4]

Thus, according to Lactantius, the burning takes place after the phoenix is dead;[5] its body, destroyed by a live-giving death, becomes warm, and this warmth itself generates a flame, while the body at the same time takes flame from the distant heavenly light: it bursts into flame and is reduced to ashes.[6] The cause of the burning is therefore sought in the increasing heat of the dead body and in the heat

[1] Lactantius, 91-94: *Ore dehinc sucos membris circumque supraque / inicit exsequiis inmoritura suis. / Tunc inter varios animam commendat odores / depositi tanti nec timet illa fidem.* The *animam commendat* (vs. 93) has been seen as influenced by Vulg. *Luke* xxiii.46: *in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum* (e.g. F. J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, (see p. 200, n. 5), 168). This is indeed possible. *Cf.* however Claudian, *Phoenix*, 94: *iam flammae commendat onus*, and Seneca, *Epistulae*, XCII, 35: *nulli reliquias meas commendo;* see also Rapisarda, 57, who, for ill-defined reasons, thinks the influence of Luke xxiii. 46 "*piu verosimile*".

[2] See p. 203, n. 3.

[3] Ansileubus, *Fragmenta e Physiologo in glossario inserta*, 12: *super aram ascendit, et circumvolvens se de aromatibus, ignem sibi ipse incendit et se ipsum exurit.*

[4] See p. 169-171.

[5] Hubaux and Leroy, 159-160, have given this too little attention; the *pausus alarum* which they situate before the burning of the phoenix (see p. 206, n. 1) is pointless at this place because it does not induce the fire. Lactantius is consistent in having the fire spring not from the living but from the dead bird.

[6] Lactantius, 95-98: *Interea corpus genitali morte peremptum / aestuat et flammam parturit ipse calor, / Aetherioque procul de lumine concipit ignem: / flagrat et ambustum solvitur in cineres.*

of the sun. We have already pointed out that here Lactantius combined the two main versions of the phoenix myth: the bird dies a natural death in its nest, but the subsequent decomposition required by the one version has been replaced by the burning of the other version.[1]

Many authors have nothing to say about the way in which the phoenix acquires new life, limiting themselves to the statement that it arises rejuvenated from its ashes or from its pyre. In some cases the resurrection is more implied than explicitly stated. This need not necessarily mean that they had no other, detailed information on this point. Most often, only the fact of the resurrection is of importance to their argumentation, the manner makes no difference; they refer only briefly to the phoenix myth or give a little more attention to some special detail.[2] In certain cases, however, because of the rather extensive description of the preparations and the burning, one would expect more details concerning the resurrection. Nevertheless in these cases too the phoenix story closes with only a brief mention of the bird's renewal.[3]

[1] It could be argued that the same conception is to be found in Artemidorus, since he too speaks first of the death of the phoenix and only then about its burning, *Onirícritica*, IV, 47: καὶ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ποιησάμενος ἐκ κασίας τε καὶ σμύρνης πυρὰν ἐναποθνήσκει. Καυθείσης δὲ τῆς πυρᾶς μετὰ χρόνον ἐκ τῆς σποδοῦ σκώληκα λέγουσι γεννᾶσθαι. It is more probable, however, that Artemidorus means that the death and cremation of the phoenic coincide. Eusebius, *Vita Const.*, IV, 72 too speaks of θνήσκειν ἐπ' ἀρωμάτων, meaning the cremation. But it is in any case certain that Lactantius deliberately meant to combine the two principal versions of the bird's genesis, as is evident from his description of the events after its resurrection (see p. 224).

[2] Martial, *Epigramm.*, V, 7, 1-4; Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*, 27; Tertullian, *De resurr. mortuorum*, 13; Solinus, 33, 12; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, IV, 72; Zeno of Verona, *Tract.*, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 381B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carm.*, I, 2, 526-533 (*PG* 37, 620A); Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, II 59; *Expositio Ps. cxviii*, 19, 13; Inscription no. 229a in Diehl, *Inscr. Lat. Christ. Vet.*, I, 55-56; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XL, 397-398; *Carmen in laudem Solis*, 31-35; Sidonius, *Carmina*, IX, 326-327; Dracontius, *De laudibus Dei*, 653-655, *Romulea*, V, 115-116, X, 107-109; Pseudo-Cyprian, *Carmina VI: ad Flavium Felicem*, 133-134; Avitus, I, 240-244; Pseudo-Ambrose, *De Trinitate*, 34 (*PL* 17, 545A-B); Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, I, 349-350; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, I, 15, 51-52; Pseudo-Bede, *Expositio in Jobum*, II, 12; *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, nos. 1 and 2; *Schol.* on Persius, I, 46; Georgius Pisides, *Hexaemeron*, 1117-1122 (*PG* 92, 1520A); Theophylactus, *Epist.*, 72 (*PG* 126, 497D).

[3] Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32: οὕτω δὲ διαφθαρέντος αὐτοῦ, νέος ἐκ τῆς

Most of the authors who did devote some attention to the events of the resurrection, mention here too the intermediate phase of the worm. This phase is much less natural in this case than in the version of the origin of the young phoenix from the decaying body of the old bird. The most probable explanation of this is that the worm from that version was simply borrowed for inclusion in the fire version. Epiphanius seems to have sensed the difficulty, because after first having said that the flesh and the bones of the phoenix were completely burned, he shortly afterward, having described the dying out of the fire, says that still unburned pieces remain and that from this dead flesh a worm appears one day later.[1] He was apparently unable to imagine that a worm could arise from dry ashes. Epiphanius also makes a strange remark about the extinguishing of the fire: at God's instruction a cloud is sent that releases rain and puts out the fire consuming the body of the phoenix, but only after the bird has died and been entirely roasted by the fire.[2] This has been seen as a rationalistic addition in the development of the phoenix myth,[3] and also as a variant of the plunge into a spring, as done by the eagle that rejuvenated itself and, according to Lactantius, also by the phoenix.[4] It is much more probable that here Epiphanius was reproducing an existing tradition he could no longer understand and therefore distorted. There are a few texts suggesting that the object of the rain was originally not to put out the fire but

τέφρας αὖθις ἕτερος γίγνεται φοῖνιξ καὶ τοῖς πατρῴοις ἔθεσι χρῆται; John of Gaza, *Descriptio tabulae mundi*, II, 220-221: καὶ νοερὸς πάλιν ὄρνις ἐδέξατο νόστιμον ἥβην / αὐτοφαὴς νεότητι μαραινομένης ἀπὸ τέφρης; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XII, 7, 22: *sicque iterum de cineribus suis resurgit; idem* Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, 8, 6 (*PL* 111, 246B) and with small deviations Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, I, 49 (*PL* 177, 48C) and *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, nos. 3 and 4.

[1] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 6: σβεσθείσης δὲ τῆς φλογὸς λείψανα τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ ἔτι ὠμὰ περιλείπεται καὶ πρὸς μίαν ἡμέραν ἀφανισθέντα σκώληκα γεννᾷ.

[2] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 5: ἐκ θεοῦ δὲ οἰκονομίας νέφος ἀποστέλλεται καὶ ὑετίζει καὶ κατασβεννύει τὴν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ὀρνέου καταδαπανήσασαν φλόγα, νεκροῦ μὲν ἤδη ὄντος τοῦ ὀρνέου καὶ ὀπτηθέντος ἀκρότατα.

[3] Rusch, 421-422.

[4] Hubaux and Leroy, 147-148. They also relate it to the report in the *Physiologus of Vienna*, that the winged worm τῇ προνοίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ flies to the ocean and there eats ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τῆς ξηρᾶς (but see the elucidation of this passage on p. 338).

to awaken new life from death after the burning. The clearest parallel with Epiphanius is found in the Turkish tradition of the bird *kerkes* (*'anḳa'*, phoenix): when nothing is left of the bird but ashes, "then by command of the Almighty, the air restores these ashes to life".[1] In the Persian translation of Ḳazwînî's *Cosmography*, too, we find this story, without mention of the divine intervention but with explicit mention of the rain: when rain has fallen on the ashes of the phoenix it gives rise to a worm on which wings grow, and from this there develops a bird that lives and dies in the same way as its predecessor.[2] In this last text it is especially clear that the rebirth of the bird is a consequence of the rain. The same perhaps finds expression in a Syriac text on the phoenix that otherwise does not refer to the origin of the bird: because there is moisture there, thanks to that a kind of worm is born.[3] We shall have to go in some detail into the Judaeo-Christian conception of the dew and the rain as the means by which God brings the dead to life.[4] This idea must also underly the motif of the rain falling on the ashes. It is in the light of the cited texts that the passage in Epiphanius about the rain sent by God must also be read. Epiphanius was not in a position to understand the meaning of the rain that originally induced new life after the conflagration, and consequently provided his own explanation, which indeed shows a rationalizing tendency. The same attitude led Epiphanius to decide that some unburnt flesh must have survived the conflagration, since he was otherwise unable to explain the origin of the worm. The detail of the life-inducing rain probably occurred in several Oriental versions of the *Physiologus*: this can

[1] W. Ouseley, *The oriental collections*, II, London, 1798, 64 (*ibid.*, 96, "*an exact imitation*" of a representation of the burning *kerkes*).

[2] Trans. Henrichsen, II, 21: *super quem cinerem ubi pluvia decidit, inde nascitur vermis, cui dein crescunt alae, atque evadit avis, quae eodem modo quo superior, quoad frictionem et cremationem agit.*

[3] H. F. Janssens, *Deux textes Syriaques inédits relatifs au phénix*, in *Le Muséon*, 47, 1934, 69: "*Comme il s'y trouve des humeurs, grâce à l'humidité, il y naît une sorte de ver*". But it is also possible that an influence of the other main version is involved here, or that the moisture is mentioned independently, because it was considered virtually indispensible in the spontaneous generation of living beings; see p. 187. A similar obscurity is found in Lactantius, see below, p. 217.

[4] See p. 341-344. In this respect little difference was seen between rain and dew. See p. 343, n. 4.

be inferred from the Syriac text that is strongly dependent on the *Physiologus*, and Epiphanius' version of the phoenix myth clearly shows that he too was influenced by this work, as indicated, for instance, by his mention of the period in which the worm develops into a fullgrown phoenix.[1]

It was usually assumed that after some time the worm appeared and then became larger, acquired wings, and grew into a bird that was identical to its predecessor.[2] The *Constitutiones Apostolorum* say in addition that the worm, "after becoming warm", takes on the form of the earlier phoenix.[3] We may assume that this is a reference to the revivifying warmth of the sun—a motif we have already encountered in Tzetzes.[4] Only the *Physiologus* and the texts related to it say that the worm developed into a phoenix in three days. Most of the versions and translations state that the priest of Heliopolis examines the ashes on the altar on the morning after the burning and finds a worm in them; on the second day the worm has acquired feathers and has become a young bird, and on the third day it appears to be a mature bird exactly like its predecessor.[5] In

[1] See also p. 223. The notion of the rain falling on the ashes seems to have been known only in the East. Epiphanius could easily have been aware of it, since he lived in Palestine from his birth in *ca.* A.D. 315 until he was chosen as Metropolitan of Cyprus in 367, and according to Jerome he knew Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic, and some Latin; see J. Quasten, *Patrology*, III, Utrecht-Antwerp-Westminster, 1960, 384.

[2] Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, IV, 47: μετὰ χρόνον ἐκ τῆς σποδοῦ σκώληκα λέγουσι γεννᾶσθαι, ὅντινα μεταβάλλειν αὐξανόμενον καὶ γίνεσθαι πάλιν φοίνικα; *Didascalia*, 40: *de cinere autem fit vermis et hic vermis crescens (de) formatur et fit iterum phoenix perfectus;* also: *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15 (see n. 3); Copt. *I Clement*, 25; John Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11; Pseudo-Augustine, *Ad fratres in eremo sermo XVIII, de invidia cavenda* (*PL* 40, 1264); Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaemeron* (*PG* 18, 732A); Michael Glycas, *Annales*, I (*PG* 158, 108C); *Schol.* on Aristides, 45, 107; Thomas of Cantimpré, *De naturis rerum*, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale*, XVII, 74; Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 772-773. See also p. 213, n. 2.

[3] *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15: ἐκ δὲ τῆς σποδοῦ σκώληκα ἀναφυῆναι, καὶ τοῦτον θερμανθέντα μορφωθῆναι εἰς ἀρτιγενῆ φοίνικα.

[4] See p. 187.

[5] *Physiologus*, 7: τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον ὁ ἱερεύς, ἐρευνῶν τὸν βωμόν, εὑρίσκει σκώληκα ἐν τῇ σποδῷ· τῇ δὲ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ εὑρίσκει αὐτὸν νεοσσὸν πετεινοῦ καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ εὑρίσκει αὐτὸν πετεινὸν τέλειον. Occurring with almost the same words in the third redaction, the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*, 21, which however adds: ὥσπερ ἦν τὸ προτέρον. See also *Appendix Physiologi*, 4. The same conception in

the *Byzantine Physiologus* the worm is not mentioned but the development of the phoenix again takes three days: on the first day the priest finds a chick, on the second day it has wings, and on the third day he finds a reborn, adult bird.[1] Epiphanius is undoubtedly drawing on the *Physiologus* when he says that after the worm has become a chick it acquires wings and on the third day reaches maturity.[2] In a variant of this tradition the development of the phoenix from the worm starts only after three days or after three days and three nights; this occurs in the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, in the Arabic and Viennese *Physiologus*, and in Alanus.[3] The motif of the three days was inserted into the existing tradition by the author of the *Physiologus* as a means of bringing out the typological symbolism of the phoenix: the events in the life of the phoenix are meant to reflect those in the life of Christ, who also rose from the grave after three

Pseudo-Jerome, *Epistola XVIII ad Praesidium; de cereo paschali* (*PL* 30, 187B); Petrus Damiani, *Opuscula varia*, LII, 11 (*PL* 145, 773C), and Reinerus, *De ineptis cuiusdam idiotae libellus* (*MGH*, Scr. 20, 597).

[1] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον πορεύεται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἱερεὺς [τῆς Ἡλιουπόλεως] καὶ εὑρήσει αὐτὸν ὄρνεον νεοσσόν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ εὑρήσει αὐτὸν ἐν πτέρυξιν ὄντα, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ εὑρήσει αὐτὸν ἀνακαινούμενον ὄρνεον καὶ ἀποπληρούμενον [ὡς τὸ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς].

[2] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 6: ὁ σκώληξ πτεροφυεῖ νεοττὸς γενόμενος, τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἁδρύνεται. According to the *Ethiopic Physiologus*, 7 (ed. Hommel, p. 52) the phoenix did not reach maturity until the fourth day. The same was probably the case for *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, no. 3, where it now reads that the phoenix rises from its ashes on the 40th day *(de cineribus suis post XL dies resurgit)*; this can hardly be taken to suggest a parallelism with the ascension of Christ.

[3] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 17, 26 (see trans. on p. 45 and 47); *Arabic Physiologus*, (ed. Land, IV, 155); *Physiologus of Vienna*, 24-26, see p. 219, n. 1; Alanus in Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, XII, 14. Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42) had the worm appear on the second day, acquire wings on the third day, and then only after several more days change into a bird with the earlier appearance. Completely independent is the Syriac *Hist. Nat.*, 42, published by K. Ahrens, *Das Buch der Naturgegenstände*, Kiel, 1892, 53: from the ashes comes a worm that transforms into a chick and becomes a mature phoenix on the seventh day. Ahrens (p. 9) held that these seven days went back to a stage of the *Physiologus* in which the three days had not yet been included in the text. Nothing is known, however, concerning possible precursors of the present Christian *Physiologus*; it seems more likely that a copyist made an error here, at least if this variant is not the result of a deliberate modification of the tradition by the compiler.

days. It is also possible that this motif was influenced by a Classical tradition of what was assumed to be the spontaneous generation of the butterfly, since, as we shall see below, Lactantius drew an association between the genesis of the phoenix and of the butterfly. Aristotle, albeit incorrectly, was of the opinion that the larvae of butterflies developed into caterpillars in three days.[1]

The *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* also speaks of a worm that arises from the phoenix, but within the context of a story differing completely from the current tradition: the bird is the daily companion of the sun, its function being to protect the earth and mankind with its wings against the burning rays of the sun. A daily renewal of the phoenix is also probably assumed here, but is not referred to.[2] In this *Apocalypse* the worm does not appear spontaneously from the dead or burnt phoenix but is expelled by the living bird, which lives on manna and dew, as its excrement. The writer added the remarkable comment that this worm becomes the cinnamon used by kings and rulers.[3] Perhaps this was his way of incorporating into his divergent version the aromatic herbs in the nest of the phoenix and the worm appearing from the dead bird or its ashes.[4] It is also possible that Pseudo-Baruch reflects a tradition according to which the worm from which the phoenix develops has a delicious scent, as it is said to have in the *Physiologus* of Ansileubus and in Petrus Damiani and Vincent of Beauvais, both of whom are dependent on the *Physiologus*: on the day of the burning the priest of Heliopolis finds in the ashes an extremely small worm which fills the air with an exquisite fragrance.[5]

This analysis of all the available information about the worm from which the phoenix developed, shows that Lactantius went his own way in this respect too. He says that the ashes of the bird are

[1] Aritotle, *Hist. Animal.*, V, 19 (551a): Γίνονται δ' αἱ μὲν καλούμεναι ψυχαὶ ἐκ τῶν καμπῶν, ... πρῶτον μὲν ἔλαττον κέγχρου, εἶτα μικροὶ σκώληκες αὐξανόμενοι, ἔπειτα ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις κάμπαι μικραί.

[2] See also p. 273 and 278.

[3] *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, 6, 12: καὶ εἶπον· Ἀφοδεύει τὸ ὄρνεον; καὶ εἶπέν μοι· Ἀφοδεύει σκώληκα, καὶ τὸ τοῦ σκώληκος ἀφόδευμα γίνεται κινάμωμον, ᾧπερ χρῶνται βασιλεῖς καὶ ἄρχοντες.

[4] As in Hubaux and Leroy, 81-82. For the cinnamon in the phoenix's nest, see p. 164-169.

[5] Ansileubus, *Fragmenta e Physiologo in glossario inserta*, 12: *invenit ibi*

moulded together and serve as seed for the phoenix. Unfortunately the surviving text is rather obscure on this point, which has given rise to a great deal of editorial conjecture.[1] With a slight modification Lactantius can also be read as saying that moisture caused the ashes of the phoenix to aggregate.[2] If this reading is indeed correct, it recalls the moisture from heaven generating new life in the ashes as described in several oriental texts.[3] This seems the most likely possibility in relation to the tradition in which the phoenix is reduced to ashes, though it remains possible that the influence of the other main version is again at work here.[4]

But it is in any case clear that according to Lactantius the ashes aggregated, serving the phoenix as semen. Zeno of Verona also mentions the ashes as "a seed for the propagation of the body", for which he may have drawn on Lactantius.[5] According to Lactantius,

vermiculum modicum suavissimo odore fragrantem; Petrus Damiani, *Opuscula varia*, LII, 11: *invenit vermiculum valde pertenuem, sed eximii odoris suavitate fragrantem;* Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale*, XVII, 74: as Ansileubus, with omission of "*modicum*".

[1] The manuscripts read (with small variants) in vs. 99-100: *quos velut in cineres in more coactos / conflat, et effectum seminis instar habet.* In analogy with Gregory of Tours, (see p. 219, n. 5) it is generally assumed that *massam* should have come before *cineres*. Brandt reads for vs. 99: *Quos velut in massam cineres natura coactos...;* Fitzpatrick: *Quos velut in massam, generans in morte, coactos...* For a detailed discussion of the various readings of vs. 99, see Walla, 167-170.

[2] This is arrived at by reading *in more* in vs. 99 as *umore*, giving: *Quos velut in massam cineres umore coactos*. The reading *umore* is adopted e.g. by Klapp, Baehrens, Froehner, Hubaux and Leroy, and Walla, 168. For the first three of these authors see the *app. crit.* on the verse in Brandt's edition; Hubaux and Leroy undoubtedly go too far in reading (p. XII): *Quos luteam in massam Natura umore coactos.*

[3] See p. 213, *cf.* the Syriac text, cited there in n. 3, which does not mention the nature of the moisture. Further support for this view would be obtained by adopting Klapp's assumption (see n. 2) that in vs. 99 *velut* is a corruption of *Deus*.

[4] Mela too speaks of an aggregation in the body fluid of the dead phoenix; see p. 188, n. 5. In that case Lactantius managed here to combine the heat and the moisture, both of which are important factors in the spontaneous generation of new life. In this connection Walla, 168, has pointed to Lactantius' remark in *Div. Inst.*, II, 9, 15: *calor et umor, quae mirabiliter deus ad sustenenda et gignenda omnia excogitavit.* See also p. 213, n. 3 on the Syriac text concerning the phoenix.

[5] Zeno of Verona, *Tractatus*, I, 16, 9: *sepulcrum nidus est illi, favillae nutrices, cinis propagandi corporis semen, mors natalitius dies.* For Zeno's

it is said that from this seed there comes a being without limbs, a worm whose colour is the white of milk.[1] He then describes the development of the phoenix in analogy with that of the butterfly. The worm grows bigger and when a certain time has passed it goes to sleep curled up in the shape of an egg: the larva has become a caterpillar which forms a cocoon. Lactantius then himself points out the resemblance to a butterfly: just as in the fields the caterpillar attached by a thread to a stone is changed into a butterfly—an image obviously inspired by Ovid [2]—so does the phoenix reacquire its former shape: its cocoon is ruptured and it comes to life.[3] In the next part of this account the young phoenix proves to be a callow infant not permitted earthly food but feeding, surrounded by wonderful fragrances, on the dew of the nocturnal heavens until it is fullgrown. The meaning of this and the points of agreement with the feeding of the young raven will be discussed in detail below.[4] The parallelism with the butterfly is clearly an elaboration of the current version of the phoenix's genesis directly from the worm. It is possible that the similar initial phase led Lactantius to combine independently the traditional genesis with that of the butterfly, but it seems more likely that he found a reference to this similarity in one of his sources. In the *Physiologus of Vienna* it is said that after three days and three nights the ashes of the phoenix give rise to a winged worm, which is compared, probably, to the silkworm emerging from its cocoon. Just exactly what is meant is unfortunately not entirely clear, because in its present form the text is untranslatable.[5] However, in Basil the Great the various metamorphoses of

dependence on Lactantius, see also p. 366, but *cf.* Ambrose, *Exaemeron,* V, 23, 79 and our suggestion concerning *vim genitalem* in Tacitus, *Annales,* VI, 28, both discussed on p. 188-189.

[1] Lactantius, 101-102: *Hinc animal primum sine membris fertur oriri, / sed fertur vermi lacteus esse color.*

[2] Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* XV, 372-374; *cf.* Fitzpatrick, p. 81.

[3] Lactantius, 103-108 (with vs. 105 and 106 after vs. 107 and 108): *Crescit, at emenso sopitur tempore certo / seque ovi teretis colligit in speciem. / Ac velut agrestes, cum filo ad saxa tenentur, / mutari tineae papilione solent, / inde reformatur qualis fuit ante figura. / Et phoenix ruptis pullulat exuviis.*

[4] See p. 350-356.

[5] *Physiologus of Vienna,* 24-26: καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερονυκτίων γεννᾶσθαι μέσον τῆς στακτῆς (zie p. 203, n. 4) σκώληκα πτερωτόν (κάθως τὴν ἀνιμέλαν τῆς μετάξης ἐστὶν ἰδεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ φοινικέλλου).

the silkworm are taken as unequivocal proof of the possibility of resurrection.[1] It is not unlikely that points of agreement were noticed, as for the phoenix and the bee,[2] between the phoenix and the butterfly: to clarify the circumstances of the life of the rare bird, use was made of welcome parallels offered by more familiar animals. In some way or other there must be a link between the traditions of the *Physiologus of Vienna* and Lactantius, since both draw a comparison with the butterfly and then speak, as the only ones to do so, of the food of the young unfledged phoenix. According to the Viennese text, the winged worm flies from the rock on which it has come into being to the shore of the ocean, where it lives from the water and the dry.[3] The most probable explanation is, therefore, that Lactantius made use of a source in which a comparison was made between the genesis of the phoenix and that of the butterfly, the parallel concerning the metamorphosis both undergo before they obtain their final shape. A factor here may have been that in Greek the butterfly is called ψυχή, while the phoenix could be a symbol of the soul (ψυχή).[4] Gregory of Tours, who says that he conveys Lactantius' material, makes no mention of the comparison with the butterfly: after the phoenix is consumed by fire the ash aggregates to become an egg-shaped mass from which the new phoenix rises.[5] Thus, Gregory does speak of the aggregation of the ashes but thereafter diverges from Lactantius and does not even mention the traditional worm. He may have done so for the sake of brevity,[6] but could also

[1] Basil, *In Hexaemeron*, VIII, 8 (*PG*, 29, 184D): the Indian worm with horns first becomes a caterpillar, then a pupa, then a butterfly. The Syriac *Hist. Nat.*, 73 (ed. Ahrens, 64) also speaks of the silkworm. J. Levie, *Les sources de la Septième et de la Huitième Homélie de Saint Basile sur l'Hexaéméron*, in *Le Musée Belge*, 1920, 145, gives as source Aritotle, *Historia animalium*, V, 19, 555b. Fitzpatrick, 82, incorrectly assumes that Basil speaks of the transformation of the phoenix, also in her "List of passages", p. 12, no. 20.

[2] See p. 188, 340.

[3] See p. 338, n. 1.

[4] *Cf.* the quotation from Aristotle on p. 216, n. 1. For the phoenix as symbol of the soul, see p. 134ff. and 363ff.

[5] Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, 12: *Tunc pulvis exustus ad se collegitur et in unam massam quasi in ovi specie conglobatur; hac exinde iterum surgens, resumpta vita, nutritur.*

[6] Gregory must have cited Lactantius from memory, which led to a rather large number of deviations from his source; see Fitzpatrick, p. 79.

have been under the influence of another source, since it is striking that in the school of Rabbi Jannai the *ḥôl* (= phoenix) undergoes a periodic resurrection agreeing completely with the description given by Gregory: after a thousand years a flame shoots out of the *ḥôl's* nest and consumes it, "yet as much as an egg is left, and it grows new limbs and lives again".[1] Here again we have the comparison with the egg and the genesis of the bird directly from it, without mention of the worm. Perhaps Gergory knew this version and adopted it rather than Lactantius' own version, with which he is nevertheless in agreement about the fact that no one takes care of the featherless young phoenix, which feeds on the dew of heaven.[2]

Claudian gives a description of the resurrection of the phoenix that diverges from the above stories, but nevertheless assumes, like Gregory of Tours and the rabbinic tradition just referred to, that the bird arises directly from its ashes. We have already seen that according to Claudian, Phoebus reigns in his horses and stops when the phoenix entreats him.[3] But it is not only the sun that stops in his courses; all movement ceases throughout the cosmos: astonished, the moon reigns in her shining bulls and the heavens cease to turn on their slow axis when the pyre brings forth new life.[4] Thus, all nature, as it were holding its breath, is involved in the birth of the phoenix. We have here a striking parallel with the famous passage in the *Protevangelium Jacobi* in which Joseph speaks of a quiescence of nature at the birth of Christ: "I looked up to the air and I saw the air in amazement. And I looked up to the vault of heaven and I saw it standing still and the birds of heaven without motion".[5]

[1] *Bereshit Rabbah*, XIX, 5 (see 205, n. 1.)

[2] For this, see p. 350, n. 1.

[3] See p. 201.

[4] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 60-62: *Nitidos stupefacta iuvencos / Luna premit pigrosque polus non concitat axes / parturiente rogo.*

[5] *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 18, 2 (ed. A. de Santos Otero, *Los Evangelios Apocrifos*, (= Biblioteca di Autores cristianos, 148), Madrid, 1956, 176): ἀνέβλεψα εἰς τὸν ἀέρα, καὶ εἶδον τὸν ἀέρα ἔκθαμβον· καὶ ἀνέβλεψα εἰς τὸν πόλον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ εἶδον αὐτὸν ἑστῶτα, καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἠρεμοῦντα. On earth too everything stops: labourers at their meal, sheep being herded, the shepherd driving them, and the goats about to drink from a river. This passage does not occur in the oldest text, see M. Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer*, V, *Nativité de Marie*, Cologne-Geneva, 1958, 25, who thinks that it was included in the *Protevangelium* toward the end of the third century. The same theme

A direct relationship need not be assumed here, for the lack of motion and the silence of nature and man is a well-known theme of the epiphany of a deity.[1] Thus, if Claudian assumed that nature stood still at the rebirth of the phoenix he did so to emphasize once again the unearthly, even divine character of the sun bird. But nature does more: she strives to prevent the eternal bird from perishing and urges on the trustworthy flames to give the phoenix back its immortal glory.[2] Immediately, a seething vitality spreads through its scattered limbs and new blood flows through its veins. The ashes to be revivified begin to move of themselves and become covered with feathers: a bird just like the father now appears, reborn, and the new bird replaces the old: only the brief interval of fire separates the two lives.[3] It is not entirely clear what agent Claudian thought actually caused the resurrection of the phoenix; the *flammae fideles* urged on by nature to return its old glory to the phoenix can be taken equally well as the burning pyre and the sun, and probably the latter was intended.[4] In Claudian's description marked emphasis is placed

occurs in the *Liber de infantia Salvatoris*, 72 (De Santos Otero, 282-283): *in illa hora requieverunt omnia silentio maximo cum timore. Nam et venti cessaverunt non dantes flatum suum, neque aliquis ex foliis arborum motus est neque aquarum sonitus auditus est,* ... etc.

[1] De Santos Otero, 177, n. 104 gives among other references for the Bible *Hab.* ii.20, *Zephaniah*, i.7, *Zech.* ii.13, and *Job* iv.2, and for the Classical authors Euripides, *Bacchae*, 1084-1085: σίγησε δ' αἰθήρ, σῖγα δ' ὕλιμος νάπη / φύλλ' εἶχε, θηρῶν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἤκουσας βοήν. See also H. R. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi. A Commentary*, Assen, 1965, 128-129; for other Classical parallels, see E. R. Dodds, *Euripides, Bacchae*, Oxford, 1944, 201. According to the midrash on Exodus, *Shemot Rabbah*, 29, 9, there was a similar paralysis in nature the angels, and men during the law-giving on Mt. Sinai, see Ginzberg, III, 97; VI, 39, n. 213, and Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 479.

[2] *Cf.* Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 774-775: *Ex se Phenicem propriam format genitricem, / ne pereat terris decus hoc insigne volucris.*

[3] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 62-71: *curis Natura laborat, / aeternam ne perdat avem, flammasque fideles / admonet, ut rerum decus inmortale remittant. / Continuo dispersa vigor per membra volutus / aestuat et venas recidivus sanguis inundat; / victuri cineres nullo cogente moveri / incipiunt plumaque rudem vestire favillam. / Qui fuerat genitor, natus nunc prosilit idem / succeditque novus: geminae confinia vitae / exiguo medius discrimine separat ignis.*

[4] The resurrection of the phoenix from the flames of its pyre is not mentioned in any Classical, Early Christian, or medieval text. The Scholiast on Aristides, 45, 107, does say that after the cremation ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρακιᾶς αὐτοῦ σκώληκα ἀναφυόμενον but here the ἀνθρακιά from which the worm appears is

on the identity of the old and the new phoenix, even to the extent that one is surprised to read a little further on that the young phoenix brings its father's remains to Egypt.[1] This must represent a concession to the other version, since the old phoenix even comes to new life here. The similarity in the appearance of the young phoenix and its predecessor is of course assumed by all the authors and stated by a few of them.[2] The *Carmen in laudem Solis* too says explicitly that it is a single bird, which is repeatedly reborn and dies.[3] The identity of the birds, despite renewal and change, was especially stressed by Christian authors, who were concerned with belief in resurrection. Tertullian emphasizes the fact that the reborn phoenix is the same as the one that has died, another and yet the same.[4] Zeno of Verona develops this idea in more detail: the new phoenix is not a spectre but reality, not an image but the phoenix itself, not another,

certainly meant to be the bird's ashes. *Cf.* Liddell-Scott, 140, s.v. ἀνθρακιά, 2: "*black sooty ashes*". J. W. Irwin, *Liber I Dracontii de Laudibus Dei*, with introd., text, trans. and commentary, Thesis Univ. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1942, 95, thought that Dracontius, I, 656-662, where the revival of an almost extinguished fire is described, concerns the resurrection of the phoenix mentioned earlier (see p. 208, n. 4), but the renewed phoenix and the revived fire are two separate examples out of a whole series of phenomena with which the Creator endowed Nature to show the reality of the resurrection to mankind. What determines the sequence of the two examples was the fire by which God renews the youth of the phoenix.

[1] See below, p. 225.

[2] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: ὡς τὸ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς; *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*, 21: ὥσπερ ἦν τὸ πρότερον; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, IV, 72: καὶ ἀναπτάντα τοιοῦτον οἷος καὶ πρότερον ἦν φῦναι; Lactantius, 107: *reformatur qualis fuit ante figuram;* Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 19, 27 (see p. 45, 47); Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comment. in Hexaemeron:* καὶ ἐκ τοῦ σκώληκος εἰς τὸν πρῶτον φοίνικα μεταβάλλεσθαι; most detailed in Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, 12: *ad pristinam speciem revocatur et ipsius figurae, eisdem plumis eodemque colore reparata progreditur, ut prius fuerat ante mortem;* also Theodoric, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 773: *primam sensim reparando figuram;* Thomas of Cantimpré, *De naturis rerum* in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XVII, 74: *in avem pristinam reformatur. Cf.* for similar remarks in the other principal version, p. 195, n. 1.

[3] *Carmen in laudem Solis*, 35: *una cadit, totiens surgitque ac deficit una.*

[4] Tertullian, *De resurrectione mortuorum*, 13: *natali fine decedens atque succedens, iterum phoenix ubi nemo iam, iterum ipse qui non iam, alius idem;* Pseudo-Ambrose, *De trinitate*, 34 (*PL* 17, 545A) retained the following of Tertullian's lapidary sentences: *naturali fine discindens, atque succindens, iterum phoenix, iterum ipsa est et non alia.*

but, albeit better, still the same as the predecessor.[1] Lactantius closes his poem with a similar statement: the new bird is itself and yet not the same, it is the same and yet not itself, because it has acquired eternal life by the boon of death.[2]

After its resurrection the phoenix flies back to its native land,[3] but John Lydus says that when the phoenix has grown wings it immediately flies to the sun, which must certainly have been inspired by the idea of the phoenix as bird of the sun.[4] Some versions of the *Physiologus* say that before leaving, the phoenix salutes the priest; the Pseudo-Basilian version has the priest utter a prayer at this point, and the Ethiopic translation adds that the bird shows itself first of all to the priest.[5] The latter embellishment is also found in Epiphanius: when it has become mature, the phoenix shows itself to those who have served it in that place and then returns to its own country, where it enjoys its rest.[6] Epiphanius makes no earlier mention of the "serving" of the phoenix; this occurs only in the *Physiologus*, where the priest prepares the altar and later inspects

[1] Zeno of Verona, *Tractatus*, I, 16, 9: *mors natalitius dies. Denique post momentum festo exsultat in tumulo, non umbra, sed veritas, non imago, sed phoenix, non alia, sed quamvis melior alia, tamen prior ipsa.* Zeno was undoubtedly influenced by Tertullian; this holds even more for Avitus, I, 240-241: *Natali cum fine perit nidoque perusta / succedens sibimet quaesita morte resurgit. Cf.* also Ambrose, *Expositio Psalmi cxviii*, 19, 13: *sibi avis superstes, ipsa et sui heres corporis et cineris sui fetus.*

[2] Lactantius, 169-170: *Ipsa quidem, sed non (eadem est), eademque nec ipsa est, / aeternam vitam mortis adepta bono.*

[3] For Artemidorus, *Didascalia* and Horapollo, see p. 309, n. 3; Copt. *I Clement* 25: *"He rises and goes forth on his ways"*, Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42): *et tunc avolat;* see also n. 5, 6; p. 225, 1.

[4] Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11: πτεροποιηθέντα δὲ παραχρῆμα ἐπὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἀνίπτασθαι; but Lydus also gives another view; see below.

[5] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: ἀσπάζεται τῷ ἱερεῖ [τῆς Ἡλιουπόλεως] καὶ ἀνακαινιζόμενον ἀπέρχεται πάλιν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τόπον; *Basilian Physiologus*, 21: εὔχεται δὲ ὁ ἱερεύς, καὶ εὐλογῶν αὐτὸν ἀποστρέφεται εἰς τὰς ἰδίας μονάς. *Cf. Appendix Physiologi*, 4. The *Syriac Physiologus*, (ed. Janssens, 65) has the bird greeted by the priest: *"Et le prêtre le salue et l'oiseau part vers son pays"*. *Ethiopic Physiologus*, 7 (trans. Hommel, 52): *"und zeigt sich dem Diener und grüsst den Priester und kehrt wieder zurück an seinem alten Aufenthaltsort"*. The oldest Greek redaction of the *Physiologus* and e.g. Pseudo-Jerome, Ansileubus, and the Syriac texts in Land, IV, 55 and Ahrens, 53 mention only the return to its own country.

[6] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 6: καὶ ἀδρυνθεὶς τοῖς τῷ τόπῳ ἐξυπηρετουμένοις ἑαυτὸν ἐμφανίζει καὶ αὖθις ἀνατρέχει εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα καὶ ἀναπαύεται.

the ashes. This again indicates that Epiphanius must have drawn on some version of the *Physiologus*. In the *Physiologus* the phoenix is a symbol of Christ, and it is conceivable that the motif of the new bird's showing of itself was inserted to provide a parallel with the appearances of Christ after his resurrection.

There was also a tradition that people came from all parts of Egypt to see the new bird. After telling how the phoenix is burned in India, rises again, and flies to the sun, Lydus adds a different story: according to Apollonius, he says, the bird does all this on the altar in Heliopolis, after which the most prominent men of Egypt gather together. Then the phoenix mounts high into the air and to the sound of their acclamation it flies back to the country from which it came.[1] Who this Apollonius was, we do not know. We have assumed that it might have been Apollonius of Tyana, although these details are not mentioned in Philostratus' report of his views on the phoenix.[2] The crowd admiring the phoenix also occurs in *De ave phoenice*. But Lactantius, like Claudian, gives a different story of the phoenix's acts after its resurrection than any other author mentioning the burning. This difference is the result of their combining of this version with that of the genesis from the decomposing remains of the predecessor. After the bird's rebirth, which they place outside Egypt, they have it go first to Heliopolis to perform the last honours for its predecessor.

We have seen that some versions say that the old phoenix is brought to Egypt in a ball of myrrh.[3] This is also the view of Lactantius: when the phoenix is given back its youth it flies away to go to its ancestral home. But before doing so it puts the remains of its own body—ashes, bones, and the cocoon from which it has appeared—together with balsam salve, mirrh, and incense from Saba, which it forms into a ball with its pious beak. Then it carries the ball in its claws speedily to the City of the Sun (Heliopolis) and places it in the temple, perching itself on the altar. The bird allows

[1] Lydus, *De mensibus*, IV, 11: πράττεται δὲ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐν Ἡλίου πόλει βωμοῦ κατὰ τὸν Ἀπολλώνιον· τοὐντεῦθεν δὴ τῶν ἐνδοξοτάτων κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον συνελθόντων τινῶν μετέωρος ἀρθεὶς μετὰ παραπομπῆς τῶν ἀθροισθέντων ἄπεισιν ὅθεν ἧκεν. For this text, see Hubaux and Leroy, 243.

[2] See p. 148.

[3] See p. 190-191.

itself to be admired and worshipped, because it is of an overpowering beauty, which is described in great detail.[1] When it arrives, all Egypt collects to see its marvellous appearance and with acclamations the throng greets the rare bird.[2]

Claudian gives a description of how, immediately after its resurrection, the phoenix first prepares the last honours for the body of its father,[3] which it carries formed into a ball to Egypt; it speeds to that alien country with the remains enclosed in a grass capsule.[4] This last point deviates from the traditional version in which the dead phoenix is transported enclosed in a ball of myrrh. In another poem in which Claudian describes the journey to Egypt he again omits the traditional myrrh but has the fragrant herbs of the pyre spread their scents a second time: the young bird takes the ashes and bones of its father in its pious claws and travels to the banks of the Nile. The eagles and the other birds of the world gather to admire the sun bird: the gleaming bird shines from afar and the *cinnama* of its fragrant funeral pyre have an enchanting perfume.[5] The impression is obtained that Claudian here took the story of Ovid and Ambrose—according to which the dead phoenix was transported in

[1] Lactantius, 115-123: *Ast ubi primaeva coepit florere iuventa, / evolat ad patrias iam reditura domus. / Ante tamen proprio quidquid de corpore restat / ossaque vel cineres exuviasque suas / unguine balsameo myrraque et ture Sabaeo / condit et in formam conglobat ore pio. / Quam pedibus gestans contendit Solis ad urbem / inque ara residens ponit in aede sacra. / Mirandam sese praestat praebetque verendam: / tantus avi decor est, tantus abundat honor.* The manuscripts give in vs. 121 *Solis ad ortus*, but since Egypt is mentioned in vs. 151 (see n. 2), *Solis ad urbem* makes more sense; but see Fitzpatrick, 83-84. For *pius* in connection with the phoenix, see Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 405 (p. 190, n. 3) and Claudian, (n. 5 here).

[2] Lactantius, 151-152: *Huc venit Aegyptus tanti ad miracula visus / et raram volucrem turba salutat ovans.*

[3] *Cf.* texts cited on p. 189, in n. 3.

[4] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 72-75: *Protinus ad Nilum manes sacrare paternos / auctoremque globum Phariae telluris ad oras / ferre iuvat. Velox alienum pergit in orbem / portans gramineo clausum velamine funus.*

[5] Claudian, *De consulatu Stilichonis*, II, 414-420: *Sic ubi fecunda reparavit morte iuventam / et patrios idem cineres collectaque portat / unguibus ossa piis Nilique ad litora tendens / unicus extremo Phoenix procedit ab Euro : / conveniunt aquilae cunctaeque ex orbe volucres, / ut Solis mirentur avem; procul ignea lucet / ales, odorati redolent et cinnama busti.* Fitzpatrick, p. 83, has erroneously taken *unguibus* in vs. 416 as *unguinibus* and therefore concluded that here Claudian refers to the wrapping in spices.

the fragrant nest in which it had died[1]—and inserted it rather awkwardly into his own version of the burning on the aromatic pyre.

We have seen that according to Pomponius Mela and Tacitus the old phoenix was burned in Heliopolis.[2] Claudian says the same, and it was probably assumed by Lactantius. This burning, which is in fact the second undergone by the old phoenix, is again the result of the combination of the two versions of the genesis of the new sun bird. Claudian says that the phoenix goes to a city renowned throughout Egypt, where the sun is worshipped with placid rites, and there enters the temple supported by a hundred Theban pillars; there, it is said, according to custom it places the remains of its father, and while worshipping the image of the god that is its master, it confides its burden to the flames, offering its own relics from which it was produced. The burning is accompanied by strange phenomena: the astonished temple glows with clear light, a divine smoke rises from the altar, and even as far away as the Pelusiac marshes the Indian scent can be smelled and has a salubrious effect on people; a light breeze, sweeter than nectar, blows over the seven mouths of the dark Nile.[3] Here the supernatural character of the phoenix is stressed once more. A clear shining light and an exquisite vitality-restoring scent had from ancient times been forms in which the divine and the holy made their appearance in the earthly world.[4] These ancient

[1] See p. 190.
[2] See p. 196.
[3] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 89-100: *Clara per Aegyptum placidis notissima sacris / urbs Titana colit, centumque adcline columnis / invehitur templum Thebano monte revulsis. / Illic, ut perhibent, patriam de more reponit/congeriem vultumque dei veneratus erilem / iam flammae commendat onus, iam destinat aris / semina reliquiasque sui: mirata relucent / limina; divino spirant altaria fumo / et Pelusiacas productus ad usque paludes / Indus odor penetrat nares completque salubri / tempestate viros et nectare dulcior aura / ostia nigrantis Nili septena vaporat.*
[4] See E. Lohmeyer, *Vom göttlichen Wohlgeruch*, (Sitzungsber. der Heidelberger Akad. der Wiss., Philos.-historische Klasse, 1919, no. 9), Heidelberg, 1919, *passim*, for health p. 14. According to the Jewish tradition, the cave of Machpelah was filled with the fragrance of Paradise and a heavenly light glowed in it: *cf.* Ginzberg, I, 289, V, 372, Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 388. For light and fire in connection with the epiphany of a deity, especially Dionysus, see Dodds, *Euripides, Bacchae*, Oxford, 1944, 200-201 on Euripides, *Bacchae*, 1082-1083. *Cf.* also the light in the cave at Christ's birth in *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 19, 2; according to Jewish tradition, a clear unearthly

images persisted with great tenacity in Christian times, especially in the legends of martyrs and saints.[1]

We have already seen that the arrival of the phoenix in Egypt is an indication that a certain fixed period has again been completed.[2] Lactantius too draws attention to this when he writes that immediately after the coming of the phoenix its image is carved in consecrated marble and a new inscription is made to record the fact of its appearance and the day on which it occurred.[3]

Lastly, it may also be mentioned that various authors include in the version of the burning the story that the rejuvenated phoenix was accompanied by a huge flock of birds honouring it as their king.[4] According to Corippus, the birds await the appearance of the new phoenix tensely: the avian choir watches for the sun and the sun bird, and as soon as it appears they loudly acclaim their new king.[5] Corippus evidently assumed that the phoenix and the sun appeared simultaneously—a point into which we shall go in more detail below.[6] As already mentioned, Claudian, in his panegyric on Stilicho, has the eagles and all the birds of the world gather together to admire the bird of the sun.[7] In his long poem on the phoenix, too, he has a great cloud of birds accompany it to Egypt: a huge army

light shone also at the birth of Noah and Moses, among others; see Ginzberg, I, 145, II, 264, 265, V, 167, 213, 245, 397. For the appearance of God in fire, see e.g. *Exod.* xix.16-18.

[1] Lohmeyer, 46-50 and H. Günter, *Psychologie der Legende*, Freiburg, 1949, 112, 258, 264, 265. The awareness of the continuity between Classical and Christian conceptions is demonstrated from the exclamation made by the father of St. Vitus when angels entered the saint's chamber: Lohmeyer, 46: *Cubiculum ... inaestimabili claritate fulgebat...; respersumque est suavissimo odore ... Qua admiratione attonitus Hylas pater beati Viti dixit: Putas, dii venerunt in domum meam ad filium meum?* For fragrant scents and strange light at the death of Mary, see the *Transitus Mariae* apocrypha in James, *Apocr. N.T.*, 208 and 213.

[2] See p. 195-196.

[3] Lactantius, 153-154: *Protinus exculpunt sacrato in marmore formam / et titulo signant remque diemque novo.*

[4] For the same theme in the other version of the renewal of the phoenix, see p. 193, and in Sidonius, p. 179.

[5] Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, I, 349-352: *Ales ut exustos cum phoenix innovat artus / a busto rediviva suo, concentus in unum / stans avium spectat solem solisque volucrem, / dum veniat, regemque novum salutant.*

[6] See p. 261, 274, 291.

[7] See p. 225, n. 5.

darkens the sky but none of the many thousands dares to approach the leader, content to worship the traces of their fragrant king. The wild hawk and even the eagle of Jupiter do not attack: respect for the phoenix brings the birds to make a truce with each other.[1] The phoenix, says Claudian, resembles a Parthian general at the head of his horsemen—an image also requiring further discussion.[2] Even before Claudian, the peaceful gathering of the birds was described by Lactantius, who assigns them a role at the departure from Heliopolis: every kind of bird assembled but not one thought of prey and none feared another; closely attended by the choir of birds the phoenix flies high in the air. The crowd follows it exulting in this pious duty. When it has reached the region of pure ether, the birds turn back, but the phoenix retires to its own country.[3]

We have already mentioned that the motif of the birds gathering from all directions at the appearance of the phoenix and accompanying it reverentially, was probably borrowed from traditional descriptions of the installation of a new ruler.[4] Reference can be made here, for instance, to an inscription from Assos concerning the inauguration of Emperor Caligula: "Each town and each people hastened to the presence of the God, because the most pleasurable time for people had now arrived".[5] Of the same emperor

[1] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 76-82: *Innumerae comitantur aves stipatque volantem / alituum suspensa cohors. Exercitus ingens / obnubit vario late convexa meatu. / Nec quisquam tantis e milibus obvius audet / ire duci, sed regis iter fragrantis adorant. / Non ferus accipiter, non armiger ipse Tonantis / bella movet: commune facit reverentia foedus.* According to Attar, *Conf. of birds*, trans. Nott, 67, the song of the phoenix has a similar effect.

[2] See p. 256.

[3] Lactantius, 155-160: *Contrahit in coetum sese genus omne volantum / nec praeda memor est ulla nec ulla metus. / Alituum stipata choro volat illa per altum, / turbaque prosequiur munere laeta pio. / Sed postquam puri pervenit ad aetheris auras, / mox redit; illa suis conditur inde locis.*

[4] See p. 193. The Chinese *fêng-huang* had several characteristics in common with the phoenix, including the appearance at the inauguration of a new ruler as omen of a fortunate period (see p. 415). Of this bird it is said: "*Wherever it goes all the other three hundred and sixty varieties of birds assemble to pay it homage*", according to J. C. Ferguson, *Chinese Mythology*, (The Mythology of all Races, VIII), Boston, 1928, 99.

[5] W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, ed. 3, II, Leipzig, 1917, 484, no. 797: πᾶσα δὲ πόλις καὶ πᾶν ἔθνος ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ὄψιν ἔσπευκεν, ὡς ἂν τοῦ ἡδίστου ἀνθρώποις αἰῶνος νῦν ἐνεστῶτος.

Suetonius says that when he journeyed to Rome with the body of Tiberius he had to pass through a very closely packed and very joyful crowd which had come to meet him.[1] In Corippus the gathering of the admiring crowd is even the sole point of comparison: like the joyous birds for the phoenix, people gather from all sides out of love for their lord and acclaim the new emperor.[2]

Lactantius and Claudian stress the fact that peace rules wherever the phoenix is present, not only in its own perfect abode and at the place at which it renews itself, but also among the birds accompanying it during its stay in our world.[3] It is the peace of the Golden Age and of Paradise, which in our reality manifests itself around the phoenix.

Peace among the animals is a common motif in descriptions of circumstances resembling Paradise. As an eschatological figure it was described the most impressively in words by Isaiah (xi. 6-8): "Then the wolf shall live with the sheep, and the leopard lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall grow up together, and a little child shall lead them; the cow and the bear shall be friends, and their young shall lie down together. The lion shall eat straw like cattle; the infant shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the young child dance over the viper's nest". This motif recurs repeatedly in the later descriptions of the Messianic time,[4] but it also occurs in the Classical literature. Virgil, for instance, says in his description of the Golden Age under Emperor Augustus that the ox will not fear huge lions.[5]

[1] Suetonius, *Caligula*, 13: *densissimo et laetissimo obviorum agmine incessit.* For the notions connected with the inauguration of a new ruler, see E. Köberlein, *Caligula und die ägyptischen Kulte*, (= Beitr. zur Klass. Philol., 3), Meisenheim am Glan, 1962, 39-43, from which the two examples given here are taken.

[2] Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, I, 356-358: *domini sic vulgus amore / undique conveniens laetarum more volucrum / "tu vincas, Iustine!" canunt.*

[3] See p. 183 and p. 329ff. The same is found in the Jewish traditions concerning the bird *ziz*, *cf.* Ginzberg, I, 4-5: *"Again, in Tishri, at the time of the autumnal equinox, the great bird ziz flaps his wings and utters his cry, so that the birds of prey, the eagles and the vultures blench, and they fear to swoop down upon the others and annihilate them in their greed".*

[4] See the places mentioned by B. Kötting, *Tier und Heiligtum*, in *Mullus* (Festschrift Theodor Klauser), (Jahrb. für Antike und Christentum, Erg.-Bd., 1), Munster, 1964, 209-210.

[5] Virgil, *Eclogae*, IV, 22: *nec magnos metuent armenta leones.*

It is also possible that the notions about the return of the Golden Age with the coming of a new ruler had some influence on the idea that all was peaceful among the birds assembling for the phoenix. The paradisiacal peace among the animals acquired an ethical twist in the descriptions of the blessings that the new ruler brings to his subjects: he restores law and justice and puts an end to all strife and injustice between men. This idea was general throughout the Near East and was also adopted in the Roman imperial ideology.[1]

We may in any case conclude that the motif of peace among the birds that worship and accompany the phoenix shows once again the extent to which the bird was a symbol of conditions belonging to the Golden Age or Paradise, conditions which will recur at the end of time and are sometimes already realized in the present.

The burning phoenix was portrayed at various times in Classical and Early Christian art. The oldest known representations date from the third century A.D. In the first half of that century a fresco showing the phoenix at the moment at which it is consumed by the flames was painted on the walls of the *Cappella Greca* in the Catacomb of Priscilla.[2] The wall paintings in the *Cappella Greca* are among the oldest products of Early Christian art. It is proof of the great symbolic value attached by the Early Christians to the phoenix that we encounter it both in the earliest Christian literature (*I Clement*, 25) and in the earliest Christian art. The phoenix in the Catacomb of Priscilla is unquestionably, as in Clement, a symbol of the resurrection of the flesh.

On the urn of M. Marcius Hermas (second half of the third century), at both sides of the inscription, there is large bird in all probability representing the phoenix standing on its still unignited funeral pyre.[3] The fact that two birds are shown need not argue against its identity, since the symmetry of the decoration of the urn is sufficient to explain the double occurrence. Further evidence that for non-Christians too the phoenix was a symbol of the life

[1] For the conceptions current in the ancient Near East: J. Zandee, *De Messias. Opvattingen aangaande het koningschap in de godsdiensten van het oude Nabije Oosten*, Leiden, 1970, 13-20. For the Roman conceptions: Köberlein, *Caligula*, 39-43, 74-76.

[2] See pl. XII.

[3] See pl. XIV.

after death is provided by the phoenix mosaic in Edessa and the epitaph of Domitius Primus.[1]

The Christian expectation of the resurrection of the flesh must also be kept in mind in connection with the burning phoenix in the Basilica of Aquileia, dating from the fourth century.[2] The flames are rendered rather statically, as vertical lines.

The phoenix in one of the apses of the hall with the Great Hunting Scene in the Roman Villa in Piazza Armerina is also shown at the moment of its burning.[3] Here it forms part of a symbolic picture of Africa, or the Earth, in which it probably symbolizes Egypt. The nest has a remarkable ovoid shape, reminiscent of the egg of myrrh in which, according to Herodotus, the young phoenix bears the body of its father to Egypt. There is no Classical or Early Christian text, however, conveying any suggestion even that it is from this egg that the bird is brought to new life by burning, and this would be impossible to reconcile with either of the two main versions. One obtains the impression that under the phoenix are the fragrant twigs so often mentioned in the literature, so that the nest or the pyre may have been meant. Nevertheless, it is probable that the man who was responsible for the mosaic attempted to combine the tradition concerning the transportation of the old phoenix in the egg of myrrh and the tradition concerning the fire, without any great concern about how such a combination should be visualized.

Equally remarkable is the representation of the phoenix in the mosaic on the floor of the church of Umm Jerar (now called Horvat Gerarit), near Gaza.[4] This phoenix too is not yet afire. It is shown sitting in the bowl of an unusual chalice-shaped altar, with the wood it has collected projecting upward on both sides of its body. There are many birds in this mosaic; if a symbolic meaning was assigned to the phoenix, it must have been the eschatological resurrection.

The work of sculpture in the Vatican Museum showing the phoe-

[1] See pl. XIII, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, XIV, 113, no. 914: *sit mihi terra lebis set tamen ad manes foenix me serbat in ara qui mecum properat se reparare sibi.*

[2] See pl. XXI.

[3] See pl. XVIII.

[4] See pl. XXXII.

nix burning on its nest is in all probability not Classical but Medieval. This is the earliest three-dimensional phoenix we know.[1]

[1] See pl. XXXVIII, 2. The gem with a burning phoenix in Kassel must also be considered not to be Classical; illustrated in F. Imhoof-Blumer and O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums*, Leipzig, 1889, 157, pl. XXVI, 21. The Kasseler collection is to be published by Dr. Peter Zazoff (Hamburg), who has written me (letter of October 21, 1969) that the stone carrying the phoenix is a modern specimen, as indicated by the material used. Interesting later representations of the burning of the phoenix are those from the lost *Physiologus* (Smyrna manuscript) and the painted ceiling in Arnhem, reproduced in pl. XXXVII and pl. XL, respectively. In the Smyrna *Physiologus* the phoenix is shown burning itself on a large column. In the sixth-century *Itinerarium* incorporated in *De locis sanctis*, a work written in 1137 A.D. by Peter the Deacon (ed. P. Geyer in *CSEL* 39, 115), the βωμός of the *Physiologus* is also said to be a large column (probably an obelisk): *Ibi* (sc. in Heliopolis) *vero est et viridarium Solis, ubi columna est grandis, quae appellatur Bomon, in qua Phoenix post quingentos annos residere consuevit.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PHOENIX AS BIRD OF THE SUN

1. External Appearance

It has become evident that in all the versions of the phoenix myth a connection between the bird and the sun was understood with respect to the bird's death and resurrection.[1] A number of authors mention it explicitly. The Roman Senator Manilius said, according to Pliny, that in Arabia the phoenix was consecrated to the sun; the same is found in Tacitus.[2] For the later poets in particular the term "sun bird" had become the established indication for the phoenix.[3] Horapollo calls the bird a symbol of the sun.[4] We shall see that its abode was often sought in the extreme East, where the sun rises: in this sense Lactantius has it live in the "grove of the sun".[5]

The close connection between the phoenix and the sun is also expressed in the external appearance assigned to the bird. This holds especially for the attributes usually associated with the head of the phoenix: a nimbus with or without rays. Before going further into this point it should be mentioned that a more natural adornment of the head was also described. In his report of the phoenix Pliny says that its head is ornamented with a crest of feathers.[6] We shall see in due course that in Classical times the appearance of the phoe-

[1] See p. 187, 194, 199-203, 205-206, 210, 214, 223, 226.

[2] Pliny, X, 4: *sacrum in Arabia Soli esse;* Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *sacrum Soli id animal.*

[3] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 7: *Titanius ales; Cons. Stilich.*, II, 419: *Solis avem;* Sidonius, *Carmina*, VII, 354: *Phoebeius ales;* John of Gaza, *Descriptio tab. mundi*, II, 210: Ἡελίου ταχὺς ὄρνις εὔπτερος; Corippus, *In Laud. Iust.*, I, 351: *Solisque volucrem.*

[4] Horapollo, *Hierogl.*, I, 34: ἡλίου ἐστὶν ὁ φοῖνιξ σύμβολον. *Cf.* also for the twelfth century Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *Epist.* 72 (*PG* 126, 497D): ὁ δέ γε τοῦ ἡλίου παῖς φοῖνιξ.

[5] See p. 311.

[6] Pliny, X, 3: *caputque plumeo apice honestante.*

nix was compared to that of the peacock.[1] This led some medieval scholars to claim that both birds also had the same kind of head array.[2] But this view, which also found expression in art,[3] does not occur in the available Classical and Early Christian sources. Pliny even made an explicit distinction between the crest of the phoenix and that of the peacock: the phoenix has a row of feathers on its head, a longer one projecting above the others in the middle, the peacock has "hairy little trees".[4] The pointed shape of the crest is also mentioned by Solinus; Claudian speaks of a comb.[5] In art, this natural decoration without the addition of a nimbus or rays occurred only occasionally. On a gem in Berlin the phoenix is represented with six vertical feathers on its head, the fourth from the front bearing a small bulbous tip, making it unlikely that an aureole was intended. In the phoenix mosaic in Edessa the bird bears a cruciform figure on its head, and on the early Christian sarcophagus in Verona the head clearly carries a kind of comb.[6]

[1] See p. 252-253.

[2] Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat. rerum*, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale*, XVII, 74: *caput habens oneratum ut pavo;* adopted by Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42): *caput habens coronatum ut pavo.* According to an English version of the *Romance of Alexander*, too, the phoenix has a "creste" like a "pacokke", see J. S. Westlake, *The prose Life of Alexander from the Thornton MS*, (Early Eng. Texts Soc., Orig. Ser., no. 143), London, 1913, 93-94. According to Mandeville, the crest of feathers on the phoenix's head is larger than that of the peacock, e.g. A. W. Pollard, *The travels of Sir John Mandeville*, New York, 1964 (Dover edition = London, 1900), 32-33.

[3] See e.g. the phoenix in the *Bestiarium* in the British Museum (Harley, 3244) in O. E. Saunders, *English illumination*, II, Florence-Paris, 1928, pl. 51b. The same head ornament is carried by the phoenix in an early edition of the *Travels* of John Mandeville, see A. Schramm, *Der Bilderschmuck der Frühdrucke*, IV, Leipzig, 1921, 19, pl. 91, no. 597 (Anton Sorg, Augsburg, 1481); in other editions it wears a crown: Schramm, XXI, Leipzig, 1938, pl. 76, no. 409 (Bernhard Richel, Basel, *ca.* 1481) and, almost identical, Schramm, XX, Leipzig, 1937, pl. 128, no. 1044 (Johann Prüss, Strassburg, 1483).

[4] Pliny, XI, 121: ... *apices, diversi quidem generis: phoenici plumarum serie e medio eo exeunte alia, pavonibus crinitis arbusculis.*

[5] Solinus, 33, 11: *capite honorato in conum plumis extantibus*, on which depends Theodoric, *De mirab. mundi*, 762: *surgit honoratus plumis a vertice conus.* Claudian, *Phoenix*, 19: *cristatus apex;* In his description of the head ornament of the phoenix, Claudian made very free use of the data in Pliny, see p. 236

[6] See pl. X, 2; XIII; XXVI, 2.

Achilles Tatius, who wrote his *Leucippe et Clitophon* in the second century of our era,[1] described the head array of the phoenix in terms suggestive of a rayed nimbus, clearly stressing the connection with sun. According to his report, the phoenix prides itself that the sun is its Lord. This is also borne out by its head, since it is encircled by a well-shaped ring. This ring is an image of the sun; it is dark blue in colour, like roses, beautiful of aspect, and ornamented with rays formed by upright feathers.[2] These last words are, at least if they correctly convey the meaning of Achilles Tatius, somewhat surprising, since they reverse the original impression that the phoenix carries a radiate nimbus.[3] It is conceivable that the text is corrupt here, and that Achilles Tatius meant to say that the rays emanating from its feathers are like a sunrise. Pseudo-Eustathius, who adopted the description of Achilles Tatius almost word for word, also seems to have had difficulty with this last phrase: he wrote that the phoenix was ornamented with rays, "like the sun standing at the zenith".[4] He omitted Achilles Tatius' remarks on the connection between the head array of the phoenix and the sun,

[1] Formerly, Achillus Tatius was usually dated as *ca.* A.D. 300, but new papyrus discoveries have shown that his work was already known in the second century A.D., see E. Vilborg, *Achillus Tatius, Leucippe and Clitophon. A commentary*, (Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia, XV), Gothenburg, 1962, 9-10, and his edition, Gothenburg, 1955, XVI-XVII.

[2] Achillus Tatius, III, 25: αὐχεῖ δὲ τὸν ἥλιον δεσπότην· καὶ ἡ κεφαλὴ μαρτυρεῖ, ἐστεφάνωσε γὰρ αὐτὴν κύκλος εὐφυής· ἡλίου δέ ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ κύκλου στέφανος εἰκών. Κύανεός ἐστιν, ῥόδοις ἐμφερής, εὐειδὴς τὴν θέαν, ἀκτῖσι κομᾷ, καὶ εἰσιν αὗται πτερῶν ἀνατολαί.

[3] Various explanations have been put forward: S. Gaselee, Loeb ed., 187, translates "... *of great beauty, with spreading rays where the feathers spring*"; Vilborg, *Commentary*, 78: "*The crown of feathers is an image of the sun, and its upright feathers can thus be called a sunrise*". T. F. Carnay, *Achillus Tatius, Leucippe and Clitophon, Book III*, The Classical Association of Rhodesia and Nyassaland, (1960), 177, thinks that instead of κομᾷ, κολλᾶται must be read: "*The meaning is "it is joined together with rays and these rays are the up-growing feathers"* ". He thinks that seen from above, the crown of feathers resembles a wheel, the feathers forming the spokes: "*The "upgrowings" of the feathers are the thick bases of the quills easily visible where the feathers grow from the flesh*", which seems rather farfetched.

[4] Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comment. in Hexaem.*, (*PG* 18, 729C): κεκέρασται γὰρ αὐτῷ χρυσῷ καὶ πορφύρᾳ τὰ πτερά, εὐφυεῖ δὲ κύκλῳ στεφάνου ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ κεκόσμηται φυσικῶς. Ἔστι δὲ ὁ κύκλος κυάνεος, καὶ ῥόδοις ἐμφερής. Εὐειδὴς δὲ ὢν τῇ θέᾳ, καὶ ἀκτῖσι κομῶν, ὥσπερ ἥλιος ἐφ' ὕψους ἵσταται.

probably because there was no room for it in the Christian interpretation of the phoenix current in his time. But Lactantius follows an uncontaminated Classical tradition in saying that the crown of rays around the head of the phoenix is a reference to the sublime head array of Phoebus.[1] In Ausonius *radiatus* has evidently already become an established *epitheton ornans* for the phoenix.[2] According to the Syriac and one of the Latin translations of the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, the great Alexander met the phoenix in the wondrous country of India: it was sitting in a tree lacking fruit and leaves, and on its head it had shining rays as does the sun.[3] The *Physiologus of Vienna* too assigns a rayed aureole to the phoenix; the *Byzantine Physiologus* implies one.[4] The description of the headdress of the phoenix in the *Phoenix* of Claudian is truly remarkable: a flaming halo encircles the bird's head, the comb-shaped crest on the ruddy head bears a kindred star, piercing the darkness with its clear light.[5] What Pliny gives as a feather projecting above the others in the crest, is in Claudian a shining star. The parallelism

[1] Lactantius, 139-140: *aptata est noto capiti radiata corona, / Phoebei referens verticis alta decus*. In this connection Miss Fitzpatrick erroneously mentions Pliny and Solinus as writers that had mentioned the aureole before Lactantius (p. 86, *ad* vs. 139).

[2] Ausonius, XXVI: *Gryphus*, II, 17: *ales ... radiatus*.

[3] For the Syriac translation, see V. Ryssel, *Die syrische Übersetzung des Pseudo-Callisthenes, ins Deutsche übertragen*, in *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 90, 1893, 364, and E. A. W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great* ..., Cambridge, 1889, 101. In the Latin *Historia de Preliis* by Leo of Naples the text reads (*Letter to Aristotle*, X): *abinde venimus ad quendam locum, in quo erat arbor, quae non habebat fructum neque folia, et sedebat super avis, quae habebat super caput suum lucentes radios sicut sol, quae vocabatur Fenix*. A new text is given in D. J. A. Ross, *A new manuscript of archpriest Leo of Naples, Nativitas et Victoria Magni*, in *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 20, 1959, 98-158, the phoenix on p. 148. This passage also occurs in the German, so-called *Strassburger Alexander*, see H. H. Braches, *Jenseitsmotive und ihre Verritterlichung in der deutschen Dichtung des Hochmittelalters*, Thesis Utrecht, Assen, 1961, 77; variant in the cited English *Romance of Alexander*, see p. 234, n. 2.

[4] *Physiologus of Vienna*, 5: ἔχει⟨ν⟩ δὲ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκτινοειδῆ. *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: στέφος δὲ φορεῖ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλήν, καὶ σφαῖραν ἐπὶ τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτοῦ ὥσπερ βασιλεύς. Here, the influence of the phoenix figure on coins seems unmistakeable.

[5] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 17-20: *igneus ora / cingit honos. Rutilo cognatum vertice sidus / attollit cristatus apex tenebrasque serena / luce secat*.

with the sun is unmistakable: just as the sun is preceded by the morning star Venus, which drives away the darkness and announces the new day, so does a clear star lift itself above the phoenix with its radiant head.[1]

The mention of the rayed nimbus in the literature is the reflection of a pre-existing iconographic tradition: the oldest representations of the phoenix show a nimbus with rays. Where and when these attributes entered the iconography of the phoenix remains a problem, but they were in any case known in Rome in A.D. 118. In that year, on the occasion of the consecration of his predecessor Trajan, Hadrian had two coins struck, on the reverse of which the phoenix is shown alone.[2] These two representations of the phoenix show only minor differences. On one coin the bird is perched on a branch of an unidentifiable species of tree,[3] its head surrounded by a nimbus within which eight or nine rays can be seen; on the other the branch is missing and the head carries a nimbus just barely pierced by seven rays emanating from the head.

From the texts cited above it is evident that it was generally thought that the phoenix owed its rayed nimbus to its close connection with the sun. In Greece, *Helios* was represented with this attribute from the end of the fifth century B.C. on. Despite related representations elsewhere, this motif seems to have developed independently in Greek art.[4] Before that time the god of the sun was shown with a solar disk above his head, but it is improbable that the nimbus derived from the disk of the sun.[5] Stephani pointed out that the aureole does not always indicate a relationship with the sun:

[1] An aureole was also assigned to Phosphorus, see below. Hubaux and Leroy mistakenly concluded from this passage that there was a special relationship between the phoenix and Venus, but here the phoenix is compared with the sun, the star shining ahead of it with Venus. See also p. 163.

[2] See pl. VI, 1, 2.

[3] Probably a laurel or palm branch, *cf.* Mattingly, *CBM*, III, 245, no. 49 and *RIC*, II, 343, no. 28; see also p. 246, n. 3.

[4] Rather out of date but on many points indispensable is: L. Stephani, *Nimbus und Strahlenkranz in den Werken der alten Kunst*, in *Mémoires de l'Acad. des Sciences de St. Petersbourg*, VIe Série, sciences politiques, histoire et philologie, IX, St. Petersbourg, 1859 (also published separately), 93-102 (origin), 25-29 (Helios), 84-86 (phoenix); also K. Keyszner, *Nimbus*, in *RE*, 17, 1, 1936, 600 (origin) and 606-608 (Helios, phoenix).

[5] Keyszner, 600.

they generally depict the lustre which according to the Greeks radiates from gods and beings endowed with supernatural power.[1] But, especially in later times, the nimbus and rays could be special solar attributes of beings having a definite connection with the sun. This is the case for the phoenix.

We thus come to the question of when and where the solar attributes were first given to the phoenix. In early times these attributes were rarely given to animals, so that it is unlikely that the bird possessed them from the beginning. Although the lack of older Greek and Roman representations makes strict proof impossible, close study of the oldest available representations of the phoenix strongly suggests the place, and vaguely indicates the time, in which the bird was first provided with the rayed nimbus.

This problem must be approached via the so-called liturgical garment of Saqqara, which was published and extensively discussed by Perdrizet in 1934.[2] On dubious grounds, Perdrizet dated the robe in the first year of the rule of Antoninus Pius.[3] The back and front are decorated with Egyptian religious motifs. On the lower right corner of the back the *benu* is shown, standing on a hill, as a long-legged bird with a large nimbus around its head, from which seven rays arise.

The iconography of this *benu* differs markedly from that of the ancient Egyptian representations. In the vignettes of the *Book of the Dead* and on many monuments the *benu* is shown as a heron-like bird with long legs and a pair of long feathers projecting horizontally

[1] Stephani, 3-13, has collected a large number of texts on this point. In his opinion it is evident from the fact that the phoenix often has only an aureole: "*dass jedoch die Künstler nicht immer gerade das hell strahlende Licht der Sonne im Sinne gehabt haben, sondern nur überhaupt göttlichen Lichtglanz*" (p. 85). In addition to the phoenix, a rayed aureole was also assigned to Phosphorus and Phaeton; Keyszner, 603, 606 and Stephani, 29.

[2] See pl. II and III here. Now in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo. According to a communication from Prof. F. A. Meinardus of the American University of Cairo (letter dated July 10, 1963), "the official description of the object as given by the Museum reads as follows: "Graeco-Roman garment painted and gilt, probably for ceremonial use, Saqqara" ".

[3] Perdrizet, *La tunique*, 110-113. He relates the garment to the beginning of the new Sothic period in A.D. 139; see above, p. 70, but the ornamentation does not justify such an exact dating. The garment may well date from the first century A.D.; see below, p. 245.

from the back of its head.[1] It has no aureole, but occasionally the solar disk is shown above the bird's head. We find the latter, for instance, in the Theban sepulchral art of the New Kingdom: a wall painting in the grave of Irenifer shows the dead man in the boat of the sun standing in front of the *benu*, which is shown as a blue heron with two feathers at the back of its head and on it a red solar disk.[2] The *benu* with the solar disk is also found in papyri.[3]

This attribute was given to various animals connected with the sun, for instance Hathor, the cow goddess, who as mother of the sun god bears a solar disk between the horns, the Apis bull, and the crocodile.[4] These sun animals always carry the disk unmistakably on the head; this attribute was never shown as a nimbus around the head, and rays were never used. The only solar disk giving off rays that occurs in Egyptian art is the one used as a symbol of the sun. It was in this way that the heretical King Ekhnaton had his god Aton represented in Amarna.[5]

Thus, although there are points of connection, the transition from the solar disk to the nimbus or aureole occurred in Egyptian art only under the influence of Graeco-Roman forms. But by that time Egyptian art could no longer be considered pure; even though many Egyptian motifs persisted, they had come to carry a strongly syncretistic character.

[1] See pl. I, 1, 2.; for other representations of the *benu*, see p. 15, n. 1.

[2] See pl. I, 1, showing an illustration from the *Book of the Dead*, 83, "The transformation into a *benu*". Many of the wall paintings in Theban graves are actually enlargements of vignettes from the *Book of the Dead*. This also holds for the Theban tomb of Anchorchawi, a *benu* from which is reproduced in e.g. G. Posener, *Dictionnaire de la civilisation égyptienne*, Paris, 1959, 223.

[3] Fitzpatrick, 87, mentions, under reference to A. S. Cook, *Old English Elene, Phoenix and Physiologus*, New Haven, 1919, XIII, n. 1, a papyrus in the Louvre "*containing a representation of the phoenix (benu) with the red sun-disk on his head*" (Unfortunately, I have been unable to gain access to this book by Cook).

[4] For these animals, see Bonnet, 277-282 (Hathor), 46-51 (Apis) and 392-394 (crocodile); for the last of these, see also below, p. 297-299, and the text of Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, V, 41, 2 and 3 quoted there.

[5] See e.g. *Encyclopedia of World Art*, IV, New York-Toronto-London, 1961, pl. 365 and col. 683 *("detail of a relief on an altar from Tell el 'Amarna')* and pl. 391 and col. 685 *("Throne of Tutankamen, 1352-1346 B.C.")*.

The syncretism which flourished in the first century A.D. in Egypt showed a certain predilection for assigning a rayed nimbus to animals that had been related to the sun in ancient Egyptian religion. As examples of this we may mention the sphinx and the scarab, the sphinx sometimes being combined in a most remarkable way with the crocodile.[1] But it is especially on the magical amulets, formerly usually called "gnostic", that this phenomenon can be found. The lion, also connected with the sun in the ancient Egyptian religion,[2] is shown on these amulets with seven rays on its head and neck,[3] or with its head bearing a solar disk with one ray in front of it and five behind it, along the neck.[4] Another interesting motif is that of Harpocrates riding on a lion with a large nimbus around its head from which six—probably originally seven—double rays spread out.[5] Harpocrates was also shown alone with a seven-rayed nimbus around his head and above that the solar disk.[6] The amulets often show a deity with a lion's head bearing a solar disk [7] or seven rays,[8] or a combination of the two,[9] or a nimbus with seven rays.[10] The lion's head with rays, and usually also with a nimbus, is seen too in

[1] Stephani, *Nimbus und Strahlenkranz*, 79-84 (sphinx, interpretation outdated!), 90-91 (scarab), with a reference to Horapollo, I, 10: πρώτη μὲν αἰλουρόμορφος, καὶ ἀκτινωτή, ἥνπερ καὶ ἡλίῳ ἀνέθεσαν διὰ τὸ σύμβολον; for the sphinx combined with the crocodile: P. Perdrizet, *Les terres cuites grecques d'Égypte de la collection Fouquet*, Nancy-Paris-Strassburg, 1921, I, 79, and II, pl. LIV, no. 191 and also below, p. 299.

[2] See C. de Wit, *Le rôle et les sens du lion dans l'Égypte ancienne*, Leiden, 1951, especially 138-147.

[3] C. Bonner, *Studies in magical amulets, chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, Ann Arbor, 1950, pl. XI, no. 238; under its body is φρη, "the sun"; see the description in Bonner, p. 293.

[4] Bonner, *Amulets*, p . XI, no. 242, description on p. 293.

[5] Bonner, *Amulets*, p . X, no. 211, description on p. 288; Bonner assumes that there were orginally six double rays, but the distribution of the rays over the nimbus makes it likely that two pairs of rays have been lost; because of minor damage, this cannot be determined with certainty.

[6] Bonner, *Amulets*, pl. XIII, no. 265, descr. p. 297; pl. X, no. 210, descr. p. 288.

[7] Bonner, *Amulets*, pl. XIII, no. 283, descr. p. 300.

[8] Bonner, *Amulets*, pl. XI, no. 234, descr. p. 292; and no. 232 (eight rays).

[9] Bonner, *Amulets*, pl. XI, no. 229, descr. p. 291-292.

[10] Bonner, *Amulets*, pl. XI, nrs. 235, 236, descr. p. 292-293. Bonner thinks that these amulets might have been made for Sethian Gnostics, because the inscriptions on the back show a Judaeo-Christian influence.

the familiar representation of the *Chnoubis*. This name is the Greek form of the Egyptian *Chnum*, the ancient ram god. As protector of the sources of the Nile and as god of creation, *Chnum* was also identified with the sun by the Egyptians. He was shown as a ram with long horns or as a man with a ram's head. The *Chnoubis* of the Roman period no longer had much to do with the ancient *Chnum*: the former was represented as a serpent with a lion's head surrounded by rays sometimes piercing a ringed halo and sometimes with only this halo.[1]

The man who made the Saqqara garment and provided the *benu* with these attributes must have lived in the syncretistic ideological climate in which a nimbus or a crown of rays were assigned to the sphinx, the scarab, the lion, and the *Chnoubis*. In the upper left corner of the back of the garment there is a winged crocodile with a Horus head, lying on a pedestal formed by nine vertical lotus flowers,[2] a motif which was very popular in Roman Egypt. We find it, for instance, on a wall painting in a temple at Coptos,[3] on bas-reliefs,[4] on a salver used for offerings,[5] and on amulets.[6] The Coptos temple was built in the time of Emperor Claudius (A.D.

[1] On *Chnum-Chnoubis:* Bonnet, 135-140; K. Sethe, *Chnubis*, 1, in *RE*, 3, 1897, 2349-2352, and especially, W. Drexler, *Knuphis*, in Rocher, *Lexikon*, II, 1, 1890-1897, 1250-1264. The older publications of *Chnoubis* gems are mentioned in W. Drexler, *Mythologische Beiträge I: Der Cultus der aegyptischen Gottheiten in den Donauländern*, Leipzig, 1890, 61-67; see also Stephani, *Nimbus und Strahlenkranz*, 89-90; a number of clear illustrations in Bonnet, *Amulets*, pl. IV, nrs. 81-94, pl. V, nrs. 95-98 (nrs. 94 and 98 without rays), descr. p. 266-269 (see also p. 321, no. 393), the meaning of *Chnoubis* is discussed in Bonner, 54-60.

[2] See pl. II.

[3] A. J. Reinach, *Le temple d'El-Kala à Koptos*, in *Ann. du Serv. des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, 11, 1911, 229.

[4] C. C. Edgar, *Greek Sculpture*, (Cat. général des Antiq. égypt. du Musée du Caire, nrs. 27425-27630), Cairo, 1903, pl. XXVIII, no. 27575 and p. 59; R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di mitologia egiziana*, Turin, 1882, pl. 116, 1 and 3; pl. 117, 2, discussed on p. 578-581.

[5] W. Weber, *Die ägyptisch-griechischen Terrakotten*, (Königliche Museen zu Berlin, Mitteilungen aus der ägyptischen Sammlung, II), Berlin, 1914, Textband, 139-140, fig. 84; on p. 140, in n. 9, many references to other monuments. Also illustrated in Perdrizet, *La tunique*, 107, fig. 5.

[6] Perdrizet, *La tunique*, 106, fig. 4 (gem from the collection of E. de Lorey, later described by Bonner, *Amulets*, 320, no. 390 and p. 326).

41-54),[1] which means that this motif must have been known at least as early as the middle of the first century A.D. Lower down on the same side of the Saqqara garment there is a related motif: on a kind of altar lies a crocodile whose head is a scarab with outspread wings; between the uppermost wings is a solar disk.[2] In the Roman period there appears to have been a preference for such combinations of animals that had from ancient times played a role in the Egyptian religion.[3] With respect to such ancient traditions a degree of freedom was often exercised that would have been unthinkable in ancient Egypt and even in Ptolemaic times.

This is also evident from the entire iconography of the *benu* of Saqqara. This bird seems to have no resemblance at all to the heron we know so well from the purely Egyptian representations: the characteristic feathers at the back of the head are lacking, the legs are longer and straight, the body is smaller and carries a long, hanging tail. It has already been shown above that the rayed nimbus of this *benu* is not of ancient Egyptian origin. Nevertheless, the nimbus betrays a distinct influence of early Egypt, since its shape and size agree so completely with those of the solar disk initially shown over the *benu's* head that it is difficult to avoid the impression that the maker of this garment considered these two attributes to be identical. We have seen that this identification would have seemed obvious to someone belonging to the Egyptian world, even though it does not seem to have given rise to the Greek nimbus. Confirmation of the conclusion that the artist had the solar disk in mind in using the nimbus is provided by another motif on the same garment. Between the wings of the crocodile with the falcon head of Horus there is a solar disk within which Harpocrates is shown, and this disk too is provided with seven rays.[3]

[1] Reinach, *o.c.*, 234-237.
[2] See pl. II.
[3] See p. 240, n. 1 for the combination sphinx-crocodile and also below, p. 299.
[4] The bird in the temple of Isis at Pompei, on the open sarcophagus of Osiris standing vertically in the "sacred gate", shows no iconographic relationship with the early Egyptian, Roman-Egyptian, or Classical *benu*-phoenix figures; see pl. IV, V. According to V. Tran Tam Tinh, *Le culte d'Isis à Pompéi*, Paris, 1964, 142, this concerns "*un phénix aux longues ailles étendues, la tête surmontée d'une ureus avec un disque solaire et un croissant de lune*" (*cf.*

If this bird had been encountered quite apart from the Egyptian context of this liturgical garment, it would have occurred to no one that a representation of the *benu* was concerned. It would have seemed completely self-evident that the bird was a phoenix. It must be kept in mind in this connection that the iconography of the bird on the Saqqara garment is not an isolated case. A number of amulets show a bird usually taken to be a phoenix but exhibiting strong agreement with the Saqqara *benu*. Among the many gems showing Harpocrates there is one with not only the young sun god but also a large, long-legged bird around whose head is an aureole with seven rays.[1] Of particular interest, too, is a group of amulets on which a similar bird forms the centre of a remarkable composition. The bird is represented with extreme elongation, with stretched legs, and a straight or slightly curved neck, its head surrounded by a nimbus from which seven rays shoot out. It ordinarily stands on a rounded object,[2] sometimes resting on an altar.[3] Further down is a crocodile, but separated by some space so that it cannot be interpreted as supporting the round object or the altar. When these objects are absent, however, the bird stands directly on the crocodile's back.[4] Above the bird's head there is always a scarab, and on

Bonnet, 845, 846 on the *ureus* serpent as sun's eye and moon's eye). Even in ancient Egypt the *benu* bore the solar disk on its head, see p. 239, but never combined with the ureus and the moon. For the representation of a bird on the sacrophagus of Osiris, one indeed thinks first of the *benu*, which was used as a symbol of Orisis (see p. 18). However, the exceptional iconography of this bird demands a cautious approach to the problem. Tran Tam Tinh suggested in a letter to me (January 16, 1971) that the painter may have had no idea of how the phoenix was usually represented. This is possible but not probable, since this artist can be judged in other respects to have been well aware of the way in which the Egyptians expressed their religious ideas pictorially.

[1] See pl. IX, 1.

[2] See pl. XI, 1-3. We have already mentioned that the sphere on the altar may well represent the ball of myrrh in which the old phoenix is wrapped by the young bird (see p. 196). It is unlikely that in this connection it would be the globe of the world on which the phoenix is shown standing on many Roman coins and, in imitation of them, in the *Chronograph of 354* (see pl. VI, 3; VII, 1-9; VIII, 1-6, 9-10, and pl. XVII, 1.

[3] See pl. XI, 1, 2.

[4] See pl. XI, 4, 5.

either side of it, in descending sequence, a bird, a scorpion, and a snake, with sometimes a crab between the last two.[1] Between the scorpions and the birds' feet there are often a couple of snake- or worm-like curved lines.[2] Most of these amulets were found in Syria, but the motifs they carry betray an Egyptian origin.[3] Like those bearing the *Chnoubis*, they were worn to promote good digestion.[4]

The same type of bird is found on the Alexandrian coins issued by Antoninus Pius in the second and sixth years of his reign.[5] Within the circumscription on the reverse of these coins there is a bird with the same perfectly straight stilt-legs and the same nimbus with seven rays around its head. This bird has always been unhesitatingly called a phoenix, but its appearance agrees so strongly with that of the birds on the gems just mentioned and on the Saqqara garment that it could equally well be called a *benu*. One cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that in early Roman Egypt the two birds were identified and for this reason were given the same appearance. This is confirmed by the fact that on the coins of Antoninus Pius the phoenix bears—albeit in a highly stylized rendition—the two backward-projecting feathers adorning the head of the *benu* on the ancient Egyptian representations. An indication of this head ornamentation is also clearly visible on a gem now kept in Athens, on which a phoenix striding to the right is shown, the head surrounded, as on the coins of Antoninus Pius, by a seven-rayed nimbus.[6] The adoption of a similar iconography for the *benu* and the phoenix must have been arived at easily, because from the time of Hecataeus-Herodotus a relationship had been drawn between the phoenix and the Egyptian Heliopolis, where the *benu* was worshipped.

This analysis brings us back to the question of where and when

[1] See pl. XI, 2.
[2] See pl. XI, 1, 4; *cf.* Bonner, *Amulets*, 60.
[3] Bonner, *Amulets*, 270, *ad* no. 103.
[4] See the discussion of these amulets in Bonner, *Amulets*, 60-62.
[5] See pl. VI, 8, 9.
[6] See pl. IX, 3. The phoenix in the Orpheus mosaic at Piazza Armerina also has a long feather projecting from the back of its head; see pl. XIX. It is possible that here too the influence of the iconography of the *benu* still had its effect.

the nimbus and rays were first assigned to the phoenix. It is clear that in Egypt many ancient Egyptian sun animals were represented with these attributes from the first century A.D. onward, and the Saqqara garment shows that this was also the case for the *benu*. The *benu* was identified with the Classical phoenix, whereupon it lost the elements of its old Egyptian iconography in which it had the appearance of a heron. It therefore seems highly likely that it was in Egypt, around the first century, that the phoenix was first shown with a rayed nimbus. The oldest example of this that can be dated with certainty is the phoenix on the coins of Hadrian issued in A.D. 118, but it is possible that the Saqqara garment and some of the amulets are older. Hadrian spent the first year of his rule in the East, mainly in Syria. In 118 he returned to Rome to celebrate the consecration of his predecessor Trajan with great pomp. The coins struck on the occasion of these events give the first indications of Hadrian's interest in coinage; they show new types and legends.[1] The use of the phoenix on some of these coins as a symbol of consecration is an entirely new phenomenon and one which, furthermore, did not occur again in this form in later Roman coinage: it took the place usually reserved for the eagle.[2] It is quite possible that during his stay in the East, Hadrian became acquainted with the phoenix as a symbol that he found to be highly suitable for these coins. We recall in this connection the phoenix mosaic at Edessa, from which it can be inferred that a century later in Syria the bird could play a role in a non-Christian milieu as a symbol of life after death.[3] And it has already been said that a number of amulets bearing the Egyptian *benu*-phoenix originated in Syria.

In this connection we must draw attention to a group of Egyptian coins from the second century of this era on which the phoenix is shown on the obverse in a way agreeing closely with that on one of

[1] See *RIC*, II, 319-320. G. Camozzi, *La Consecratio di Traiano*, in *RIN*, 14, 1901, 12-13, thinks that the coins with the phoenix were minted before the official consecration ceremony, in A.D. 117.

[2] On the eagle on consecration coins: G. Camozzi, *La Consecratio nelle monete da Cesare ad Adriano*, in *RIN*, 14, 1901, 42-44; on the peacock, *ibid.* 45; on the phoenix *ibid.*, 51-53. The phoenix on these coins is "*un tipo assolutamente nuovo nella monetazione romana*".

[3] See pl. XIII.

Hadrian's coins of A.D. 118.[1] In this case the phoenix has no aureole but the characteristic feathers of the *benu* are visible at the back of the head, as on the Alexandrian coins of Antoninus Pius. The type of bird is not the same on all these coins. Under or in front of its feet there is a twig. On the reverse side the Apis bull is shown with the solar disk between its horns. Above the bull's back are the characters ∟B, used to indicate that the coins had been struck in the second year of an emperor.[2] This could equally well be the second year of Hadrian (A.D. 118) or of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138/139). Both emperors issued coins bearing a phoenix in their second year and there are arguments in support of both possibilities, but a decision is difficult to reach on the basis of the available evidence.[3]

These oldest known representations of the phoenix show one particular detail requiring further discussion: the bird's head almost always carries an aureole with *seven* rays. Although it is evident that this number was not considered imperative,[4] it is encountered far into Christian times, lastly in the apse of St. Cecilia in Rome dating from the pontificate of Pascal I (817-824).[5] But in this final instance the representation is entirely traditional, since the mosaic is an imitation of the much better known example in the apse of the

[1] See pl. VI, 5-7.

[2] *Cf.* R. Stuart Poole, *Catalogue of the coins of Alexandria and the Nomes*, London, 1892, xi. The symbol ∟ for ἔτος frequently occurs in Greek papyri too, cf. L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, I, 1, Leipzig-Berlin, 1912, XLV *("aus dem Demotischen")*.

[3] R. Stuart Poole, *Catalogue*, 337, gives the following description: *"Phoenix (Numidian Crane), crested, l.; in front olive-branch"*. G. Dattari, *Appunti di numismatica alessandrina*, in *RIN*, 13, 1900, 381-382, assigned the coins on dubious grounds to Caligula (A.D. 37/38). Adopted with a certain amount of hesitation by G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek coins in the Hunterian Collection*, III, Glasgow, 1905, 406, no. 28 (descr. *"Bird with long legs and neck, standing l., with closed wings"*) and J. Vogt, *Die alexandrinischen Münzen*, Stuttgart, 1924, I, 22 and II, 4 (taken as Ibis). The two feathers projecting backward make it virtually certain, however, that this is a phoenix. It seems most probable that the coins were struck under Hadrian at the same time as his Roman coins carrying the phoenix, which may also be indicated by the branch in front of the bird. One is then led to wonder at the absence of the rayed nimbus, since it occurs on the coins and gems of the second century and on the Saqqara garment. This may mean that after all the coin was minted under an earlier emperor.

[4] *Cf.* e.g. pl. VI, 2; X, 1; XI, 5; XII; XVII, 2.

[5] See pl. XXX, 2.

church of SS. Cosma e Damiano, made under Felix IV (526-530).[1] That the use of seven rays in later times was not purely a matter of chance or an uncomprehended stereotype is made clearly evident by the phoenix in the apsidal mosaic in the hall of the Great Hunting Scene in Piazza Armerina. Because he lacked sufficient space above the bird's head, the artist curved one of the rays even though the symmetry of the aureole was disturbed as a result. With this solution there are four rays on the anterior part of the head, and these have a different shape than the three at the rear.[2]

The phoenix owes these seven rays to its relationship with the sun. On the Egyptian amulets from the Roman period, Harpocrates, Helios, the sun god with the lion's head, as well as the lion linked to the sun, and *Chnoubis*, were also preferentially shown with seven rays.[3] An excellent example of the sun god with a nimbus and seven rays is provided by the Helios of the Casa di Apolline in Pompei.[4] On the Mithras monuments, too, Sol was often shown with this number of rays.[5] The same holds for the sepulchral monuments. On a fragment of a Roman sarcophagus the moon brings the soul of the deceased, represented as a winged child, to the sun, whose head bears seven rays.[6] The deceased is also shown with a seven-rayed crown as an indication of the elevation of his soul to the world of the

[1] See pl. XXIX, 2. It is furthermore probable that this mosaic too is based on an older example; *cf.* G. J. Hoogewerff, *Il mosaico absidale di San Giovanni in Laterano ed altri mosaici romani*, in *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 27, 1952-54, 297-326.

[2] See pl. XVIII. The phoenix in the Orpheus mosaic has six rays, see pl. XIX.

[3] *Harpocrates*: Bonner, *Amulets*, pl. X, no. 210 (descr. p. 288), pl. XIII, no. 265 (descr. p. 297); *Helios:* Bonner, pl. XI, nrs. 223 and 226 (descr. p. 290-291), pl. XXI, no. 391 (descr. 320); in pl. XI, nrs. 227 and 228 *Helios* has six rays; for the *Chnoubis:* Bonner, pl. IV, nrs. 83, 85, 86, 89, 92 (descr. p. 267-268), pl. V, no. 96 (descr. p. 268); *cf.* no. 84: four rays, nrs. 81 and 87: six rays, no. 88: nine rays; nrs. 90, 91, 95: twelve rays.

[4] Good illustration in D. Levi, *Aion*, in *Hesperia*, 13, 1944, 303, fig. 21. On the Saqqara garment too, the solar disk surrounding Harpocrates has seven rays; see pl. II.

[5] See Cumont, *Textes et monuments*, I, 123, especially n. 6.

[6] Cumont, *Symbolisme funéraire*, 245, pl. XXII bis, 1; *idem*, *Lux perpetua*, 181; also Nilsson, *Gesch. der gr. Rel.*, II, 475, pl. 5, 1.

stars and in particular to the sun.[1] In a more spiritualized form these themes acquired great importance in the "Chaldean" theology of Julian the Apostate, Proclus, and others: the sun god draws the souls upward and in this function he is called "the one adorned with seven rays".[2] The number seven had been sacred from ancient times, so that the seven rays must have had a religious meaning. Here they could be a reference to the perfection of the life after death awaiting pure souls in the sphere of the planets and of the sun. It is in the context of such conceptions that an interpretation could have been given to the seven rays of the phoenix, a bird which could be a symbol of life after death.

With respect to the colour of the nimbus of the phoenix, the literature contains only a single indication given by Achilles Tatius, at least if he indeed had a nimbus in mind:[3] according to him, the aureole around the bird's head is dark blue, like roses. By blue roses the Alexandrian Achilles Tatius must have meant the Egyptian blue lotus or sea-rose *(Nymphaea caerulea)*.[4] He could have derived

[1] Cumont, *Symbolisme funéraire*, 243-244, pl. XXI; *idem, Lux perpetua*, 181-182 and Nilsson, *Gesch. der gr. Rel.*, II, 475, pl. 4, 3.

[2] For this, see W. Theiler, *Die chaldäischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesios*, (Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse, 18, 1) Halle, 1942, 35; H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and theurgy*, (Publ. de l'inst. Franç. d'arch. orientale. Recherches d'arch., de philol. et d'histoire, XIII), Cairo, 1956, 199, n. 97; O. Perler, *Die Mosaiken der Juliergruft im Vatikan*, (Freiburger Universitätsreden, N.F. no. 16), Fribourg, 1953, 45 and n. 141 on p. 68-69; also Cumont, *Textes et monuments*, I, 123 and *idem, Études syriennes*, 106-107; J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, II, Paris, 1938, 284-285, and *De resurrectione (Epistula ad Rheginum)*, (ed. Malinine, Puech, Quispel, Till, Zurich, 1963), XVI. The morning and evening star Venus was also shown with seven rays, as indicated e.g. by the stele of Albano, *cf.* Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, 184, 297, pl. II; the editors of the *Epistula ad Rheginum* were mistaken in interpreting the seven rays on the star shown above a two years old child on this stele as: *"les sept rayons de la couronne héliaque"*; see also p. 271 here.

[3] See p. 235.

[4] On the blue lotus: F. Woenig, *Die Pflanzen im alten Ägypten*, Leipzig, 1886, 30-34, figs. 5-11; V. Loret, *La flore pharaonique d'après les documents hieroglyphiques*, Paris, 1887, 55-56; Steier, *Lotos*, in *RE*, 13, 1927, 1521-1522. Callixenus in Athenaeus, XV, 677d, distinguishes between two kinds of lotus flowers used for making wreaths: the lotus occurs in two colours (καὶ εἰσιν αὐτοῦ χροιαὶ δύο), one resembling that of the rose (ἡ μὲν τῷ ῥόδῳ ἐοικυῖα), this one serving for the so-called στέφανος Ἀντινόειος; the other lotus was used for the so-called στέφανος λώτινος which is dark blue (κυανέαν ἔχων τὴν χροιάν).

this detail from a picture of the phoenix. Krücke's research has shown that initially the Christians followed the Classical model for the colour of a nimbus. In profane Classical art the nimbus was usually given a greyish-blue or greenish-blue colour, and in the Christian frescos and mosaics of the third and fourth centuries tones of blue predominate. It was not until the fifth century that blue was replaced by gold.[1] For the first four centuries no example of a phoenix with a blue nimbus is known,[2] but there are later monuments showing that it had not completely disappeared even though gold and related colours occur for the phoenix too.[3] The beautiful phoenix from Antioch, now in the Louvre, has a purplish-grey nimbus with five pink rays.[4] On the already-mentioned mosaic of SS. Cosma e Damiano, the phoenix bears on its head a greyish-blue aureole from which project seven similarly coloured rays making a gradual transition to the sky-blue of the background. The ninth-century mosaic in the apse of St. Prassede also shows dependence in this respect: the phoenix has a blue nimbus, here carrying a white border from which nine rays project.[5]

Thus, even the oldest known representations of the phoenix show the nimbus and rays. They form such a fixed element in the icono-

Achilles Tatius' text makes it likely that both the red and the blue lotus were called "rose".

[1] *Cf.* A. Krücke, *Der Nimbus und verwante Attribute in der frühchristlichen Kunst,* (Zur Kunstgeschichte des Auslandes, XXXV), Strassburg, 1905, 119-122.

[2] All the motifs on the Saqqara garment are done in a reddish-brown, so it gives no indication of what the colour of the phoenix's nimbus was thought to be in Roman Egypt (communication of Dr. Meinardus, see p. 238, n. 2). In the catacomb of Priscilla the nimbus of the phoenix is not coloured; the nimbus of the burning phoenix in the Piazza Armerina mosaics is red; see e.g. G. V. Gentili, *Die Villa Erculia in Piazza Armerina*, Stuttgart, s.a., pl. XXXVI. The phoenix from Old St. Peter's, however, is encircled by a blue nimbus; see Frontispiece.

[3] One of the first examples is the yellowish-gold, peripherally reddish nimbus of the phoenix in S. Giovanni in fonte at Napels: see also Krücke, 30, no. 157. Wilpert, *MM*, I, 103-104, neglects in his discussion of the rayed nimbus of the phoenix the fact that in this respect the Christians were entirely dependent on the Classical iconography of the bird.

[4] Lassus, *La mosaique*, 100, 102; D. Levi, *Antioch mosaic pavements*, I, Princeton-London-The Hague, 1947, 353, refers to the κύανεος of Achilles Tatius, "*similar to the colour in our mosaic*".

[5] See also Krücke, 72 and 27, no. 122, and 28, no. 136.

graphy of the phoenix that the bird can almost always be recognized by their presence.[1] Only in a few cases do these attributes occur separately.[2] On the sarcophagi these traditional head ornaments are entirely absent, due to the material and to the fact that in this case the bird forms only a small detail of a larger composition.[3] In a few other representations of the phoenix, some of them rather primitive in execution, the nimbus and rays are also missing.[4] In several of the cases in which these attributes occur there is also an indication of a crest but without any suggestion of an influence of the two feathers at the back of the head shown by the Roman-Egyptian

[1] The only other distinct characteristic is the flames in which the phoenix is sometimes shown. In that case the phoenix usually has a rayed nimbus too (e.g. Catacomb of Priscilla, pl. XII, and Piazza Armerina, pl. XVIII). In a few cases the name phoenix was added to indicate which bird was the subject, as in the phoenix mosaic of Edessa and the Christ-phoenix in the tomb of the Valerii under the Vatican, see pl. XIII and XV. Above the entrance to S. Paolo fuori le Mura at Rome there was—now lost by fire—unmistakeably a dove with a twig in its beak but carved above it the word FENIX (see pl. XXXVI, 3). In all likelyhood a dove was originally represented and later on an attempt was made to transform it by the inscription. Several other birds were also shown with a nimbus (but without rays): the eagle as symbol of John the Evangelist has only the nimbus, see Krücke, 89-91, like the eagle on many floor mosaics in Greek churches, see Keyszner, (p. 237, n. 4), 623-624. In the *tesoro* of the *Sancta Sanctorum* of the Lateran there is a silk cloth showing cocks with a nimbus, *cf.* Ph. Lauer, *Le tésor du Sancta Sanctorum, MMAI*, 15, 1906, 111-113, pl. XVII (middle of the ninth century, influence of Coptic textiles). A similar bird with a nimbus but with the crest of a peacock is seen in a Merovingian mosaic at Thiers, *cf.* L. Bréhier, *Les mosaiques mérovingiennes de Thiers*, in *Mélanges littéraires publiés par la Faculté des Lettres de Clermont-Ferrand à l'occasion du Centenaire de sa création (1810-1910)*, Clermont-Ferrand, 1910, 69-85, pl. II; the bird reminded Bréhier of the peacock, but on the basis of the nimbus he assumed that the phoenix was meant; although the mosaic is damaged, one has the impression that the peacock was shown with spread wings and tail, the eyes of the tail being rendered like flowers on stems (a good illustration is found also in O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine art and archaeology*, Oxford, 1911, 692, fig. 440).

[2] Only rays: pl. XI, 1; XI, 7; XXXVI, 1, 5. Also the phoenix in S. Silvestro at Tivoli (*cf.* p. 251, n. 2, and p. 451). Only nimbus: pl. XXIII; XXIX, 1.

[3] See also Krücke, 72; this might also explain why the birds on the urn of Marcius Hermas, at least if these are phoenixes (see p. 230), show no nimbus or rays.

[4] See pl. V; IX, 2; XI, 6, 8; XXXIV, 1; XXXVI, 3, 4; For some of these the phoenix might be doubted, but see remarks and references in the documentation to the plates. For other dubious phoenixes, see below, p. 458.

benu-phoenix.[1] The rayed nimbus occurs in three variations on the monuments more or less concurrently, making it impossible to distinguish a developmental line in the iconography of the phoenix with respect to this point. These three variants are: a) a nimbus containing the rays; b) a nimbus with rays arising from the periphery; and c) a nimbus pierced by rays arising from the bird's head.[2]

The descriptions of the other physical features of the phoenix also clearly show the extent to which it was considered to be the bird of the sun in Classical times. The agreement between its exotic appearance and aspects of other sun birds is most striking. This holds especially for the detailed descriptions given by Ezekiel the Dramatist, Lactantius, and Claudian, but also for those in Pliny and the *Byzantine Physiologus*. In addition to explicit references to the eagle and the peacock, there are also unmistakable points of agreement with the descriptions of the Indian birds *orion* and *catreus*, the oriental cosmic cock, and the closely related Arabian '*anḳa*'. It seems certain that in the descriptions of all these sun birds the oriental tradition of the immense cosmic bird had an extremely strong influence. We shall see in the next section that another important element of this tradition was also borrowed for the phoenix.

Herodotus, who admitted that he had only seen a picture of the phoenix, says that in appearance and size this bird shows the most resemblance to the eagle.[3] The same comparison is to be found in Pliny, Solinus, and Philostratus.[4] If Herodotus, or rather his source

[1] See Frontispiece (*cf.* p. 425); pl. XVII, 1; XXIII; XXXV; XXXVI, 2.

[2] In the Middle Ages the phoenix was usually shown without nimbus or rays, because it was then no longer taken as symbol of the sun. When these attributes were given it, there was always a direct Early Christian influence involved, e.g. in the *traditio legis* in S. Silvestro at Tivoli. In the Abbey of Farfa the phoenix is shown standing on the Paradise mountain where the Lamb of Christ usually stands, *cf.* I. Schuster, *Reliquie d'arte nella badia di Farfa*, in *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 34, 1911, 328-331. This bird carries a cruciform nimbus usually reserved for Christ. Here, therefore, the nimbus is determined not by the sun symbolism but by the Christ symbolism.

[3] Herodotus, II 73: ἔγω μέν μιν οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ ὅσον γραφῇ ... ἔστι δέ, εἰ τῇ γραφῇ παρόμοιος, τοσόσδε καὶ τοιόσδε· τὰ μὲν αὐτοῦ χρυσόκομα τῶν πτερῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐρυθρά, ἐς τὰ μάλιστα αἰετῷ περιήγησιν ὁμοιότατος καὶ τὸ μέγαθος.

[4] Pliny, X, 3: *Aquilae narratur magnitudine;* Solinus 33 11: *aquilae magnitudine;* Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III, 49: χρυσῷ λάμποντα, μέγεθος ἀέτου

Hecataeus, actually saw a picture of the Egyptian *benu*, this representation must have deviated widely from the current type, since the *benu* was usually rendered as a heron.[1] But it would hardly be wise to take Herodotus' report seriously, because the preceding description of the hippopotamus is also far from accurate.[2] The Alexandrian Jew Ezekiel the Dramatist, who gives the oldest surviving detailed description of the phoenix, says that it is almost twice as large as the eagle.[3] It is not hard to understand why comparison with the eagle was made in describing the phoenix: both were sun birds, both were seen as king of the birds, and the traditions of both tended to cross and recross.[4]

Lactantius compares the phoenix with the largest bird known to the Classical world; he says that even the ostrich can barely equal the phoenix in size.[5] He thus shares Ezekiel's conviction that the phoenix is larger than the eagle, but is alone in drawing the comparison with the ostrich. Still greater dimensions are attributed to the phoenix only in the texts in which it is identified with the oriental cosmic sun bird.[6] Both Ezekiel and Lactantius reveal clear traces of this oriental tradition, and it is perhaps this tradition which led them to believe that the phoenix was the largest of all birds.

Achilles Tatius and Pseudo-Eustathius, who was dependent on him, say that the phoenix is as large as the peacock. The former then says immediately that the phoenix far surpasses the peacock in beauty; the latter says only that there are differences on this point.[7]

καὶ εἶδος. So also *Corpus Gloss. Lat.*, V, 381, 4: *Fenix genus aquile*, and Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, XXIII, 110 (42): *est autem, ut dicunt, aquilinae magnitudinis*.

[1] See pl. I, and p. 15.

[2] Herodotus, II 71; see also p. 401-402.

[3] Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 256: διπλοῦν γὰρ ἦν τὸ μῆκος ἀετοῦ σχεδόν.

[4] For the mixing of the traditions of the phoenix and eagle, see p. 161, n. 4.

[5] Lactantius, 145-146: *magnitiem terris Arabum quae gignitur ales / vix aequare potest seu fera seu sit avis*.

[6] Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 6: ὡς ὄρη ἐννέα; *Disputatio panagiotae cum Azymita*: ὡς ἀπὸ πηχῶν ἐννέα; *Slavonic Henoch*, 6 (ed. Vaillant = 12 Charles): "*neuf cents mesures*"; *Physiologus of Vienna*, 3: ὡς ἑνὸς νησίου τὸ μέγεθος, τοῦ λεγομένου φοινικῶνος.

[7] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 1: μέγεθος κατὰ ταών· τῇ χρόᾳ ταὼς ἐν κάλλει δεύτερος; Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaem.*, (*PG* 18, 729c): ὁ δὲ φοῖνιξ μέγεθος μὲν ἔχει ταῶνος, διαφέρει δὲ τῷ κάλλει τοῦ ταῶνος τῇ χροιᾷ.

Strabo and Aelian report, on the authority of Clitarchus, that the *catreus* too resembles the peacock in size.[1] The comparison of the beauty of the phoenix with that of the peacock, to the latter's disadvantage, is also found in in the *Byzantine Physiologus* and Tzetzes.[2] The appearance of the phoenix made Lactantius think of a mixture of peacock and pheasant.[3] Only in Ausonius does the comparison fail to favour the phoenix: in a letter to Paulinus of Nola he argues that even though he is older than Paulinus he is surpassed in talent by the younger man—the bird of the Ganges (i.e. the phoenix) does not surpass the hundred eyes of the peacock's tail just because it lives a thousand years![4] In considering the comparison of the size and beauty of the phoenix with those of the peacock one must not loose sight of the fact that in the Middle and Far East the peacock had from ancient times been a sun bird.[5]

The exquisite blazing colours of the phoenix are celebrated by all the authors who describe it. On this point it differs from all other birds, says Tacitus.[6] Herodotus knew that it had gold and red feathers, and these colours recur in all the later descriptions.[7] They

[1] Strabo, XV, 1 69: τὴν γὰρ ἰδέαν ταῷ μάλιστα ἐγγίζειν; Aelian XVII, 23: τὸ μέγεθος γὰρ εἴη ἂν κατὰ τὸν ταῶν. The agreement between the phoenix, the catreus and the orion was first pointed out by Hubaux and Leroy, 30-37; appearance: p. 36-37.

[2] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: τῆς ταῶνος ὡραιότερον ὑπάρχει see also p. 256, n. 5); Tzetzes, V, 388: Ταῶνος ὡραιότερος καὶ μείζων ἀσυγκρίτως. Hubaux and Leroy, 36, are of the opinion that here Tzetzes reflects Chaeremon (first century A.D.), but the latter is first mentioned in vs. 395, after Philostratus (vs. 394); it seems more likely that Tzetzes was dependent for this on the *Physiologus*. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De prop. rerum*, XII, 14, says of the phoenix: *pavonis in plumis similima*, but *cf.* p. 234.

[3] Lactantius, 143-144: *Effigies inter pavonis mixta figuram / cernitur et pictam Phasidis inter avem.*

[4] Ausonius, *Epist.*, XX, 9-12: *Nec quia mille annos vivit Gangeticus ales, / vincit centum oculos, regie pavo, tuos. / Cedimus ingenio, quantum praecedimus aevo: / adsurgit musae nostra camena tuae!* How easily the phoenix and the peacock are mentioned in the same breath is evident in Martialis, V, 37, 13-14, where praise is sung for a small slave, who died at the age of six: *Cui conparatus indecens erat pavo, / inamabilis sciurus et frequens phoenix!*

[5] See e.g. Forstner, *Welt der Symbole*, 331 and Wensinck, *Tree and bird*, 38.

[6] Tacitus, *Annales*, VI, 28: *et ore ac distinctu pennarum a ceteris avibus diversum consentiunt qui formam eius effin(x)ere.* The word *ore* probably refers to the song of the phoenix, see p. 200-202, 282-284.

[7] Herodotus, II, 73; see p. 251, n. 3; also Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III,

are the colours of the sunrise, and this raises again the question of what connection there is between the often mentioned purple-red colour of the bird and its name.[1] Ezekiel the Dramatist reports that the phoenix has long saffron-coloured "locks" along its throat.[2] The same is found in Pliny and Solinus: it has a golden shimmer around its neck and a tuft on its throat.[3] These details may be the result of the influence of a traditional aspect of the ancient Egyptian *benu*, which was usually shown with such a tuft.[4] But a somewhat similar statement was also made about the Arabian *'anḳa'*: this bird was supposed to owe its name to a white collar around its neck.[5]

According to Pliny and Solinus, the rest of the body was purple and the tail bluish with rosy quill-feathers.[6] Ezekiel the Dramatist says that the breast is purple and the wings multicoloured; he makes no mention of the tail.[7] Lactantius too says that the wings were of many colours: Iris, goddess of the rainbow, colours the wings of the phoenix as she does a cloud.[8] This comparison with the rainbow recurs only in the *Slavonic Enoch*, which also mentions purple, and in the description of the Persian *simurgh-'anḳa'*.[9] With respect to the dominant colour on the body, the various manuscripts of *De ave phoenice* give mutually divergent readings, which has led those who have published editions of this poem to many different emendations,

49; see p. 251, n. 4; Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 1: κεκέρασται μὲν τὰ πτερὰ χρυσῷ καὶ πορφύρᾳ; Tzetzes, V, 389: καὶ χρυσοπρεπωδέστερος.

1 See p. 61-62 and p. 402.

2 Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 259-260: καὶ κατ' αὐχένα / κροκωτίνοις μαλλοῖσιν εὐτρεπίζετο.

3 Pliny, X, 3: *auri fulgore circa colla, cetero purpureus, caeruleam roseis caudam pennis distinguentibus, cristis fauces.* Solinus, 33, 11: *cristatis faucibus, circa colla fulgore aureo, postera parte purpureus absque cauda, in qua roseis pennis caeruleus interscribitur nitor.*

4 See pl. I.

5 See *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, I, Leiden-London, 1913, 356.

6 See n. 3.

7 Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 257-258: πτεροῖσι ποικίλοισι ἠδὲ χρώμασι· / στῆθος μὲν αὐτοῦ πορφυροῦν ἐφαίνετο.

8 Lactantius, 133-134: *Alarum pennas insignit desuper Iris / pingere ceu nubem desuper aura solet.*

9 *Slavonic Henoch*, 6, (ed. Vaillant, 91): *"leur aspect pourpré comme l'arc-en-ciel des nuages"*. For the *simurgh-'anḳa'* see Henrichsen, *De phoenicis fabula*, II, 29: *"Quod ad formam ... attinet, immensa describitur et miraculosa figura, eiusque pennae coeli sole occidente rubentis iridis colores referre dicuntur"*.

some of which lie very far apart.[1] Lactantius compared the colour of the phoenix with the colour of ripe pomegranates and the petals of the wild poppy, which gives the impression that he meant red. But the difficulty is that the manuscripts speak of the saffron-coloured skin of the pomegranate,[2] although this is mainly red. Nevertheless, emendation is not required here, because the red colour of the pomegranate takes life on a background of yellow and white.[3] Lactantius must have had saffron yellow and red in mind: it is with these colours mixed together that the bird's shoulders, breast, head, neck, and back are covered.[4] This is confirmed by his remark that as far as its external appearance is concerned the phoenix resembles not only the peacock but also the pheasant.[5] On the tail of the phoenix, according to Lactantius, there are yellowish-gold spots in which the purple shines red.[6] Claudian gives the wings a blue colour with gold spots.[7] These last two descriptions are strongly reminiscent of the *catreus*, which according to Aelian had bluish-green feathers on its head and scattered saffron spots, the tips of its feathers being emerald green.[8] Strabo says it is generally

[1] Except for a few insignificant differences, the two most important manuscripts (Veronensis 163 and Leidensis Vossianus Q. 33, ninth and tenth century, respectively) offer the following reading: *Principio color qualis sub sidere caeli / mitia quae croceo punica grana legunt, / qualis inest foliis quae fert agreste papaver, / cum pandit vestes flore rubente caelo (polo).* For a discussion of the conjectures on this point, see Fitzpatrick, 52, and Walla, 172-175, as well as the editions of Riese, Baehrens and Brandt. In vs. 125-126, Fitzpatrick reads: *primo qui color est malis sub sidere Cancri, / cortice quae croceo Punica grana tegunt;* Hubaux and Leroy who also offer their own version (p. XIV), albeit highly dependent of Brandt, give here: *Puniceo colore est quali sub sidere Cancri / mitia quod corium punica grana tegit.*

[2] See n. 1; "*croceo*" omitted by e.g. Brandt, and Hubaux and Leroy.

[3] See I. Benzinger, *Fruchtbäume in Palästina*, in *Realenc. f. prot. Theol. und Kirche*, 6, 3rd ed. Leipzig, 1899, 305: "*von lieblich roter Farbe, die aus Gelb und Weisz hervorspielt*"; otherwise in Fitzpatrick, 84 (*ad* vs. 126) and 85 (*ad* vs. 129).

[4] Lactantius, 129-130: *Hoc humeri pectusque decens velamine fulget, / hoc caput, hoc cervix summaque terga nitent.*

[5] See p. 253, n. 3.

[6] Lactantius, 131-132: *caudaque porrigitur fulvo distincta metallo, / in cuius maculis purpura mixta rubet.*

[7] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 21-22: *Antevolant Zephyros pennae, quas caerulus ambit / flore color sparsoque super ditescit in auro.*

[8] Aelian, XVII, 23: τὰ δὲ ἄκρα τῶν πτερῶν ἔοικε σμαράγδῳ. ... τὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς πτίλα γλαυκωπά, καὶ ἔχει ῥανίδας οἱονεὶ κρόκῳ παρεικασμένας, εἶτα ἄλλην ἄλλῃ διεσπαρμένας.

variegated, and Nonnus gives it yellow feathers and purple wings.[1]

Toward the end of his poem Claudian again summons up a picture of the beauty of the phoenix when he compares the royal bird, followed by all the other birds, with a Parthian general leading his barbarous horsemen, exotically attired with precious stones, costly trappings, and his head wreathed with a royal garland, his steed bridled with gold, and his purple-dyed robe embroidered with Assyrian motifs.[2] This comparison brings out the most striking aspects of the exotic appearance of the phoenix: the precious stones, the wreath, the gold, and the purple. The precious stones are mentioned by Lactantius in his description of the bird's beak, which has a whitish colour mixed with the green of emeralds, being composed of pure ivory and set with precious stones.[3] Furthermore, the eyes remind Lactantius of blue hyacinth stones (i.e. sapphires).[4] These same stones are mentioned in the description of the wings of the phoenix in the *Byzantine Physiologus*: the peacock has wings covered with gold and silver, those of the phoenix are covered with hyacinths and emeralds and other precious stones.[5] Here again the resemblance to Aelian's description of the *catreus* is unmistakable: this bird too resembles the peacock, and the tips of its feathers are emerald green.[6] The relationship of all this to oriental conceptions is clearly shown by the fact that the description in the Arabic literature of the immense cosmic cock also mentions gold and silver, hyacinth and emerald.[7]

[1] Strabo, XV, 1, 69: λαμπρότατον δὲ κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν καὶ πλείστην ἔχοντα ποικιλίαν τὸν καλούμενον κατρέα; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XXVI, 209: φοινικέαις πτερύγεσσι κεκασμένος.

[2] Claudian, Phoenix, 83-88: *Talis Barbaricas flavo de Tigride turmas / ductor Parthus agit: gemmis et divite cultu / luxurians sertis apicem regalibus ornat. / Auro frenat equum, perfusam murice vestem / Assyria signatur acu tumidusque regendo / celsa per famulas acies dicione superbit.*

[3] Lactantius, 135-136: *Albicat insignis mixto viridante zmaragdo / et puro cornu gemmea cuspis hiat.* The remarks on the beak of the phoenix in the *Physiologus of Vienna*, originally pertained to the crocodile, see below, p. 296.

[4] Lactantius, 137-138: *Ingentes oculi, credas geminos hyacinthos, / quorum de medio lucida flamma micat.*

[5] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10 (continuation of citation on p. 253, in n. 2): ἡ γὰρ ταὼν διὰ πρασίνου καὶ χρυσίου (or: χρυσίου καὶ ἀργυρίου) τὴν χρῷαν τῶν πτερύγων αὐτῆς ἔχει, ὁ δὲ φοῖνιξ διὰ ὑακινθίνων καὶ σμαράγδων καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν.

[6] See p. 255, n. 8.

[7] See Wensinck, *Tree and bird*, 36: "*his breast is from yellow gold, his belly*

The eyes of the phoenix are described more than once as very striking. Ezekiel the Dramatist says that they are yellow and that the pupils shine like the red "berry" of the kermes oak; he also remarks that the head as a whole looks something like that of the cock, which is again reminiscent of the oriental cosmic cock.[1] The colours red and yellow are also found in the more detailed description of the eyes of the *catreus* given by Aelian after Clitarchus: the iris is vermilion, the pupil yellow, and even the white is yellowish; the bird has a sharp gaze.[2] Nonnus says of the *catreus* that its eyes shine as the rays of the rising sun.[3] The strange shining of the eyes is also mentioned by Lactantius, who says that the eyes are very large and remind one of a pair of blue hyacinth stones (i.e. sapphires) from which a lucent flame flashes.[4] According to Aelian, the *orion*, which with the *catreus* forms an inseparable pair, also has blue eyes.[5] Claudian speaks of the mysterious glow shining out of the eyes.[6] On the Antioch mosaic the phoenix also has a black-bordered, brilliantly shining eye which immediately attracts attention.[7] The clear, radiant eyes of the phoenix emphasize its great beauty but are also an indication of its supernatural character and refer to the all-seeing god of the sun whose servant and symbol it is.[8]

The legs of the phoenix are red according to Ezekiel the Dramatist, purple according to Claudian.[9] Lactantius says that they are scaly

is from white silver; his feet are of red hyacinth, his feet (?) of green emerald".

1 Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 261-263: κάρα δὲ κοττοῖς ἡμέροις παρεμφερές, / καὶ μηλίνῃ μὲν τῇ κόρῃ προσέβλεπε / κύκλῳ· κόρη δὲ κόκκος ὣς ἐφαίνετο.

2 Aelian, XVII, 23: ἐρεῖς δὲ κινναβάριν⟨ον⟩ εἶναι τὸ ὄμμα πλὴν τῆς κόρης· εἰκείνη δὲ μήλῳ τὴν χρόαν παρείκασται, καὶ βλέπει ὀξύ. τό γε μὴν τοῖς ἁπάντων ὀφθαλμοῖς λευκόν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τοῦ κατρέως τοῦδε ὠχρόν ἐστι.

3 Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XXVI, 213-214: ξανθοφυής, λιγύφωνος· ἀπὸ βλεφάρων δέ οἱ αἴγλη / πέμπεται ὀρθρινῇσι βολαῖς ἀντίρροπος Ἠοῦς.

4 See 256, n. 4.

5 Aelian, XVII, 22: ὀφθαλμοὺς δὲ κυανοῦς ἔχει.

6 Claudian, *Phoenix*, 17; *Arcanum radiant oculi iubar.*

7 *Cf.* Lassus, *La mosaique*, 102.

8 *Cf.* Deonna, *Le symbolisme de l'oeil*, (Trav. publ. sous les ausp. de la Soc. suisse des sciences morales, 5), Bern, 1965, 102, 108-111, 256-258; P. Wilpert, *Auge*, in *RAC*, I, 1950, 961-962; L. Bieler, *ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ*, I, Vienna, 1935, 54.

9 Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 259: σκέλη δὲ μιλτόχρωτα; Claudian, *Phoenix*, 20: *Tyrio pinguntur crura veneno.*

and yellowish-gold, the claws of a rosy hue.[1] Aelian reports, from Clitarchus, that the *orion* resembles the heron in size and like it has purple legs, the claws of the *catreus* having the orange of sandarac.[2] These colours occur on the mosaics too: the Antioch phoenix has long pink legs, those of the bird in the apse of SS. Cosma e Damiano are yellowish-gold.[3]

Only Ezekiel the Dramatist and Lactantius have something to say about the gait of the phoenix. The former describes the way in which the phoenix strides ahead of the other birds: proud as a bull, with a rapid, light step.[4] This light-footedness is also found in Lactantius: although it is about as large as the ostrich, it is not as sluggish as other large birds whose weight makes them slow, but is light and quick, full of royal dignity.[5] When pictured the phoenix is usually shown standing, but on the amulet published by the Count of Caylus it indeed has the described proud light gait.[6] On this point the agreement between the wording of Ezekiel and Lactantius is so striking as to suggest literary dependence of the latter, but apart from this and a few other similarities the differences in their descriptions as a whole are too great for a direct connection to be likely.

This detailed survey of the literature on the colours of the phoenix

[1] Lactantius, 141-143: *Crura tegunt squamae fulvo distincta metallo / ast ungues roseo tinguit honore color.* Without any reasons provided by the manuscripts, Hubaux and Leroy changes *fulvo distincta metallo* in vs. 141 into *Tyrio bis tincta veneno* (p. XIV-XV), Baehrens gives here *depicta veneno,* apparently because *fulvo distincta metallo* has already occurred in vs. 131; see 255, n. 6.

[2] Aelian, XVII, 22: τοῖς μὲν ἐρωδίοις ὅμοιος τὸ μέγεθος, ἔστι δὲ καὶ τὰ σκέλη ὡς ἐκεῖνοι φοῖνιξ; *idem*, XVII, 23 (concerning *catreus*): πόδες δὲ αὐτῷ σανδάρακινοι.

[3] For the phoenix from Antioch, see also Lassus, *La mosaique*, 102.

[4] Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 268-269: αὐτὸς δὲ πρόσθεν, ταῦρος ὡς γαυρούμενος, / ἔβαινε κραιπνὸν βῆμα βαστάζων ποδός. Hubaux and Leroy, 46, propose that the rather unexpected ταῦρος be read as γαῦρος, as a result of which γαῦρος ὡς γαυρούμενος would have to be interpreted as a Hebraism.

[5] Lactantius, 147-149: *non tamen est tarda ut volucres quae corpore magno / incessus pigros per grave pondus habent, / sed levis et velox, regali plena decore.* See also Claudian on p. 256, in n. 2.

[6] See pl. X, 1; this phoenix is suggestive of a cock, which is also suggested by the light, proud gait described by Ezechiel and Lactantius; see also Ezekiel on the head of the phoenix on p. 257, in n. 1. One is led here to wonder wether there was also an influence of the oriental tradition of the cosmic cock.

shows that there was no clearly defined tradition on this point in the Classical world. The gold and red mentioned by Herodotus prove to have been generally accepted, but in all other respects none of the authors giving detailed descriptions are in accordance with any other writer. The same uncertainty holds for the frescoes and mosaics: none of the artists seems to have known what colour was to to be given to the various parts of the bird; in any case the colours vary from case to case. It is striking, however, to note that the purplish-red mentioned so often in the literary descriptions is rarely used in the painted and mosaic portraits. In contrast, the gold-yellow and gold-brown tones occur frequently, not only for the bird's breast but also for the neck and the wings folded against its body.[1] Because there is no iconographic tradition in this respect, there is little point in describing the coloured representations in detail.[2] We have also been unable to find a single case in which an artist was governed in his choice of colours for the phoenix by a given writer, although parallels can be indicated for a few details.[3]

We have seen that the phoenix shares many aspects of its appearance with other birds of the sun. It is not only explicitly compared with the eagle and the peacock, but it is also given many external characteristics agreeing with or reminiscent of those of the *catreus* and *orion*, which are considered to be Indian, the Arabian-Persian *ʿanḳaʾ-simurgh*, and the cosmic cock. This can only be explained by assuming that the authors who described these birds, including the phoenix, drew on an oriental tradition concerning "the" bird of the sun. It seems likely that this tradition was dispersed via Alexandria. Ezekiel the Dramatist lived and worked in Alexandria, and the same holds for Clitarchus, who was the first to discuss the *catreus*

[1] In SS. Cosma e Damiano the neck and wings of the phoenix are a golden brown, in S. Prassede the bird's breast is a golden yellow.

[2] The degree of freedom exercised can be inferred from these three examples: in S. Giovanni in Fonte at Napels (fifth century) the phoenix has a white breast and is otherwise a bluish-grey with white stripes to indicate the wings; in the Antioch mosaic it is predominantly green, the dark shadows brown, and in the lighter parts grey, yellow, and white appear; the legs are pink; in SS. Cosma e Damiano (sixth century) the breast is green, the neck and wings golden brown, and the legs a golden yellow.

[3] See e.g. for the Antioch mosaic, p. 257, 258.

and *orion* in detail.[1] Claudian, whose first works were written in Greek, also came from Alexandria.[2] Concerning the remarkable ideas on the phoenix in the *Slavonic Enoch*, it will be shown below that they must have originated in Alexandria and that the *Byzantine Physiologus* contains concepts that can only be explained on the basis of an Alexandrian origin.[3] This cosmopolitan city was long a centre of science and pseudo-science, and as for religion, the climate there proved to be favourable for the development of many syncretistic systems.

We have devoted considerable attention above to the role of the Roman-Egyptian *benu*-phoenix in the development of the rayed aureole, the most characteristic component of the Classical iconography of the phoenix. Unfortunately, we cannot determine what colours were visualized for this *benu*-phoenix, because all the figures on the Saqqara robe, including the bird we are interested in, were carried out in the same shade of reddish-brown. The ancient Egyptian representations of the *benu* seem to have contributed to the general picture of "the" sun bird, since this bird's characteristic tuft, on the lower part of the neck, was also given to the phoenix. The comparison of the *orion* with the heron in Clitarchus-Aelian is also perhaps a reminiscence of the *benu*.[4] All this leads to the conclusion that Lactantius, who lived for a long time in the East,[5] also made welcome use of that tradition concerning the appearance of the sun bird in general when he came to describe the phoenix. Only in this way, and not by the assumption of some literary dependence, can the many parallels and related imagery we have identified in his description be explained. We have postulated that in this tradition concerning the appearance of the sun bird oriental influences predominate, and in the following it will become clear that Lactantius was quite aware of the oriental conception of a cosmic sun bird.

[1] See A. Dieterich, *Ezechiel Tragicus*, in *RE*, 6, 2, 1909, 1701-1702, and F. Jacoby, *Kleitarchos*, in *RE*, 11, 1921, especially 622-627.

[2] *Cf.* e.g. B. Altaner and A. Stuiber, *Patrologie*, 7th ed., Fribourg-Basel-Vienna, 1966, 295-302.

[3] See below p. 295-302.

[4] See p. 258, n. 2.

[5] See Altaner and Stuiber, *Patrologie*, 185.

2. Escort of the Sun

The foregoing has made clear how closely the Classical world connected the phoenix with the sun. We come now to the discussion of a number of texts in which the special character of the phoenix as bird of the sun is expressed in an unusual way. We are concerned here with the conception that the phoenix accompanies the sun on its daily journey along the vault of the heavens. The texts in which this idea is found prove to be closely related, and it will also become evident that the phoenix was neither the only nor the first bird to be assigned this function. The texts to be discussed, which diverge widely from the Classical phoenix traditions, also make it possible to explain a number of verses from Lactantius' *De ave phoenice*.

It will be best to start with the long phoenix passage in Chapters 6 to 8 of the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, a Jewish book dating from the second century of our era.[1] The context of this part of the book is so important in relation to our subject that it will be well to paraphrase it in some detail:

6. The seer is taken to the place where the sun rises by the angel who explains everything Baruch sees. There he beholds a four-wheeled chariot with fire under it, and in it a man bearing a crown of fire. Forty angels propel the chariot; and a bird as large as nine mountains[2] goes before it. The angel explains to Baruch that this bird is the guardian of the earth, for it flies along with the sun the whole day long and catches the burning rays of the sun with its wings: if it failed to do so, neither mankind nor any other living be-

[1] For the dating, see the edition by James, in *TS*, V, 1, Cambridge, 1897, LXXI, V. Ryssel in Kautzsch, *Apokr. und Pseud.*, II, 448, H. M. Hughes in Charles, *Apocr. and Pseud.*, II, 530, and A.-M. Denis, *Introduction aux Pseud-épigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament*, (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha, I), Leiden, 1970, 82. The text is cited here according to the edition by J.-C. Picard, *Apocalypsis Baruchi Graece*, (Pseud. epigr. Vet. Test. Graece, II), Leiden, 1967. For one of the two Slavonic versions, see W. R. Morfill, *The Apocalypse of Baruch, translated from the Slavonic*, (*TS*, V, 1), Cambridge, 1897.

[2] *Ch.* 6, 2: ὡς ὄρη ἐννέα; the Mss. have ὄρει. For the various suggested readings, see Hughes, p. 536, who however himself infers an indication of the

ing would remain alive. God has appointed this bird to its task.[1] On its right wing appears in huge letters: "Neither earth nor heaven bring me forth, but wings of fire bring me forth".[2] On being asked, the angel says that this bird is called "phoenix", feeds itself with heavenly manna and earthly dew, and excretes a worm that becomes cinnamon, which is used by kings and rulers.[3] Then, with a thunderous din, the 365 gates of heaven are opened. A voice cries: "Giver of light, give thy light to the world!"[4] The bird makes a sound meant, according to the angel, to waken the cocks on earth so that they can announce the rising of the sun by their crowing.[5]

7. The phoenix raises itself slowly till its full size can be seen; the sun follows it, accompanied by the angels who set a crown upon his head. Baruch cannot bear the brilliance, but the more strongly the sun begins to shine the wider the phoenix spreads its wings.

8. After they have observed the sunrise in this way, the angel takes Baruch to the west to show him the sunset as well. The phoenix is still leading the way, and the angels who accompany the sun remove the crown from his head. The bird stands still in exhaustion with its wings contracted.[6] The angel explains that four [7] angels will carry the crown to heaven to refurbish it there, because it and its rays had been defiled upon earth. When Baruch asks how this can occur, the angel answers that it happens because of the sight of the unlawful and unjust deeds of men; the list of these deeds forms an impressive catalogue of sins. That the phoenix is at the end of its strength need cause no surprise, because throughout the day it has

distance and uses the text of the *Disputatio* (see below, p. 274) without qualification in emendation; ὡς ἀπὸ πηχῶν ἐννέα: "*about nine cubits away*". Nevertheless, it is certainly an indication of size; see p. 252, n. 6.

[1] *Ch.* 6, 6: ἀλλὰ προσέταξεν ὁ θεὸς τοῦτο τὸ ὄρνεον; *cf.* Lactantius, vs. 33-34 on p. 281, in n. 2.

[2] *Ch.* 6, 8: οὔτε γῆ με τίκτει οὔτε οὐρανός, ἀλλὰ τίκτουσί με πτέρυγες πυρός; here the Slavonic translation has (Morfill, 99): "*Neither heaven nor earth hath produced me, but the Son of the Father*".

[3] For food, worm, and cinnamon, *cf.* respectively p. 340-348 and 216.

[4] *Ch.* 6, 14: Φωτόδοτα, δὸς τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φέγγος.

[5] The Slavonic translation has the phoenix itself make this call to the sun (Morfill, 99). Hubaux and Leroy, 3, assume that the call is directed to the phoenix, but this is wrong; see below.

[6] *Ch.* 8, 2: τὸ δὲ ὄρνεον ἔστη τεταπεινωμένον καὶ συστέλλον τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ.

[7] Here the Slavonic translation reads 400 angels (Morfill, p. 99).

received the fire of the burning rays on its wings, thus protecting life on earth from being scorched to death.

So, according to this text, the phoenix makes the heat of the sun bearable: now the rays only behold the sins of mankind, but if the phoenix was not there the sun would be a consuming fire for those same sinners. Underlying this conception is the ancient Eastern and Classical view of the sun as the god of law and justice, who "sees and hears all things".[1] But the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* is a Jewish book, and this implies that not the sun but God has the final word: He stands above the sun, and shows Himself to be not only the Holy One but also the Merciful One. He has given the phoenix its protective task: [2] for the author of this apocalypse the bird is a sign of God's grace. James was the first to point in this connection to a related passage in the Christian *Apocalypse of Paul*.[3] According to the latter text, the sun repeatedly implored God to permit him to deal with mankind according to his powers, so that they would recognize that God alone is God. The sun asked this because each day he looked down upon the godlessness and iniquity of man. But his pleas were refused with the explanation that although it is true that God sees and hears everything, He tolerates the sinners in his forbearance until they repent; but if they fail to do so He will Himself judge them.[4] According to this apocalypse, appeals

[1] For Mesopotamia, *cf.* E. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, (Les anc. relig. orient., II), Paris, 1945, 63-64, 87-88 and F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl in G. van der Leeuw (ed.), *De godsdiensten der wereld*, I², Amsterdam, 1948, 133-135. For Israel, see e.g. *Ps.* xix.7 and the commentary on it by H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, I, Neukirchen, 1960, 156-157; *cf. Jes. Sirach*, 43, 1-5, and the rabbinical views below. For Greece, see Homer, *Ilias*, III, 277 and also Jessen, *Helios*, in *RE*, 8, 1, 1912, 58-59, and F. Cumont, *Il sole vindice dei delitti ed il simbolo delle mani alzate*, in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, Ser. III, *Memorie*, I, 1, Roma, 1923, 65-80.

[2] See p. 262, n. 1.

[3] James, p. LXVII, where he also mentions *Test. Levi*, 3, 1: the lowest heaven is dark because it sees all the injustices committed by man.

[4] *Apoc. of Paul*, 4. *Cf.* M. Lidzbarski, *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*, II, Giessen, 1915, 183, to the sun: "*Kreise in der Welt und sei ein Richter über alle Welten. Wenn du eintrittst und wenn du austrittst ... erhitze dich nicht und wüte nicht an meinen Söhnen. Versündige dich nicht an meinen Jüngern, die bei dir in der Welt wohnen*".

like that of the sun are also addressed to God by the moon, the stars, the sea, the waters, and the earth, but the forbearance of God always proves to be greater than that of nature.[1] A related conception is the Jewish idea that the sun and the moon must be compelled to fulfil their daily courses, because they can no longer bear the sight of man's iniquities.[2] When, according to the *Midrash on Lamentations*, Moses asked the sun why it did not become dark when the enemy entered the temple, he receives the answer: "By thy life, O Moses, faithful shepherd, how could I become dark when they did not permit me and did not leave me alone? But they beat me with sixty whips of fire and said to me: "Go, pour forth thy light"".[3] These last words recall the summons to the light-giving sun in the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* and some other texts to be mentioned shortly.[4] The conception that the sun becomes tarnished and weakened by the sins of man also occurs in the rabbinical literature: it explains why the sun is blood-red at setting, for blood is a sign of corruption.[5]

It seems certain that Pseudo-Baruch transposed to the phoenix a tradition originally applied to a bird unknown to the Greeks and called by the Jews *ziz*, among other names. This name was derived from the Hebrew *ziz sadai*, "the teeming life of the fields", which according to *Ps.* l. 11 stands before God. In the targum on this verse the term is interpreted as "the wild cock whose ankles rest on the ground and whose head reaches the sky".[6] The enormous dimensions of this bird are also conveyed in the Babylonian Talmud, where it is connected with the ocean: Rabbah ben Bar Ḥanna and his company saw the *ziz* with the water reaching to its ankles, and taking this to mean that the sea was not deep there, they were about to swim when a voice from the heavens warned them that seven years

[1] *Apoc. of Paul*, 5-6.
[2] See Ginzberg, I, 25, III, 297-298, IV, 309, V, 37-38, n. 105 and VI, 397, n. 38, 39.
[3] *Midrash Rabbah Lamentations*, Proems, XXIV, trans. A. Cohen, *Midrash Rabbah Lamentations*, London, 1951, 47-48; *cf.* Ginzberg, IV, 309.
[4] See p. 272, 275, 291.
[5] Ginzberg, I, 25, and V, 37-38, n. 105.
[6] See the abundant data in Ginzberg, I, 4-5, 28-29, V, 46-47, n. 129-139, from which the following material is borrowed.

earlier an axe was dropped into the water at that place and had not yet reached the bottom.[1] According to Rabbi Judah, who also discussed the phoenix, when the *ziz* spreads out its wings it darkens the disk of the sun. This identifies the *ziz* with the hawk of which it is said in *Job* xxxix. 26(29) that it spreads its wings to the south where the sun stands at the zenith.[2] Rabbi Judah does not refer here to the protective function of the sun bird, but the Talmud does so, albeit in a slightly different form: Rabbi Ḥanan transmitted as a teaching of Rab that four winds blow every day, but the north wind mixes itself with all of them because otherwise the world could not endure them for a moment. But the heat of the south wind is so great that it would nevertheless destroy the world if it were not that the *ziz*-hawk of *Job* xxxix.26 held it back with its wings.[3] The *ziz* is also called *renanim*, because it is the celestial singer. *Renanim* is actually the Hebrew word for the female ostrich, whose name derives from the verb for "cry loudly, jubilate".[4] In the *Targum on Job* this bird is called "the wild cock" and identified with *sekwi*, "the seer".[5] In the Talmud it is also called *bar yokni*, "the son of the nest", because its young hatch without help. *Bar yokni* is an enormous bird: an addle egg that it carelessly threw out of its nest flooded sixteen cities and destroyed three hundred cedar trees.[6]

These Jewish traditions concerning the *ziz* and some other birds equated with it, are related to a whole complex of ideas about an

[1] *Baba Bathra*, 73b, trans. M. Simon-I. W. Slotki, *Baba Bathra*, I, London, 1935, 291, where *note* 9 gives a translation of *Targum, Ps.* l.11.

[2] *Midrash Leviticus*, 22, 10, trans. J. Israelstam-J. Slotki, *Midrash Rabbah Leviticus*, London, 1939, 289-290. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 19, 4, trans. H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah Genesis*, I, London, 1951, 151 (For Rabbi Juda's conception of the phoenix, see p. 152).

[3] *Baba Bathra*, 25a, trans. Simon-Slotki (n. 1), 124; *Giṭṭin*, 31b, trans. M. Simon, *Giṭṭin*, London, 1936, 129-130.

[4] *Cf.* Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexicon*, 895-896, s.v. רנן and רְנָנִים.

[5] *Targum* on *Job* iii.6, xxxviii.36, xxxix.13, *cf.* Ginzberg, V, 47, n. 136. According to *Rosh Hashana*, 26a (trans. M. Simon, *Rosh Hashana*, London, 1938, 118), south of Aleppo the cock was called *Sekwi:* Rab Judah transmitted in the name of Rab, or Rabbi Joshua ben Levi that this bird is mentioned in *Job* xxxviii.36.

[6] *Bekoroth*, 57b, trans. L. Miller-M. Simon, *Bekoroth*, London, 1948, 391; *Menaḥoth*, 66b, trans. E. Cashdan, *Menaḥoth*, London, 1948, 392 *ad Job* xxxix.13. Ginzberg, I, 29, mentions 60 cities; for *bar-yokni*, see also Ginzberg, V, 47, n. 138.

immense cosmic bird developed in the Near and Middle East, and in which Persia seems to have played a leading part. In the *Avesta*, Ahura Mazda reveals to Zarathustra that the servant of Sraosha is the cock *parôdars* which is mockingly called *kahrkatâs*. At the break of day this bird incites mankind to arise and drive away the evil spirits.[1] Sraosha is the God who never sleeps and who protects the worshippers of Mazda in the night; the cock is consecrated to him, the name *parôdars* meaning "he who foresees [the light]".[2] This is directly connected with the Jewish cosmic cock *ziz*, which is indeed called the celestial singer and seer. But in the course of its development this conception seems also to have been influenced by certain traditions concerning the Indian bird *garuda*. It is said of this immense monster, half bird, half man, that it hatched from its egg without help—like the Jewish *bar yokni*—and then grew so rapidly that in no time at all its body reached as high as the sky.[3] Furthermore, the *garuda* played an important role when the sun planned to destroy the earth by its heat: it carried Aruna on its back to the point at which the sun was to rise, so that Aruna could place himself in front of the sun to act as his charioteer and to take away his heat by veiling his disk. Although it is not expressly stated that this was done by the wings of the *garuda*, it seems to be assumed.[4]

It is difficult if not impossible to trace the development of the

[1] *Vendidad*, 18, 15-16, English translation in J. Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta I: The Vendidad* (*SBE*, IV), Oxford, 1880, 139-196, German translation in K. F. Geldner, *Die zoroastrische Religion*, (Religionsgesch. Lesebuch, 1) Tübingen, 1926, 38. For these Persian conceptions and their influence on the Pythagoreans (i.e. the prohibition against killing a white cock), see the important article by F. Cumont, *Le coq blanc des Mazdéens en les Pythagoriciens*, in *Comptes rendues de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1942, 284-300, and *idem*, *Luxperpetua*, 409-411; for the influence of these ideas in the Early Christian *Gallicinium*, see G. van der Leeuw, *Gallicinium. De haan in de oudste hymnen der Westerse Kerk*, in *Mededeelingen der Ned. Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afd. Letterk., IV, 19, Amsterdam, 1941, 833-852 (on the Iranian conceptions, 844-851), *cf.* also L. H. Gray, *Cock*, in *ERE*, III, 1910, 694-698, and for the Greek views, Thompson, *Glossary of Greek birds*, 33-44.

[2] Van der Leeuw, 846-847; Gray, 694.

[3] *Mahabharata*, 23, trans. Pratapa Chandra Ray, *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa translated into English prose*, Calcutta, 1893, 87.

[4] *Mahabharata*, 24, trans. Chandra Ray, 90-91. Reference is made to this text by James in the introduction to his edition of the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, p. LXVI.

Jewish traditions concerning the cosmic cock, but there is no doubt that we encounter many later conceptions closely related to them. For instance, the Arabian '*anḳa*', which after the rise of Islam was definitively assimilated to the Persian *simurgh* and probably also to the Indian *garuda*,[1] was described as a huge creature whose eggs were as large as mountains,[2] which in turn is reminiscent of the *bar yokni*. The *simurgh-'anḳa'* is, like the *garuda*, a sun bird;[3] both these birds feed mainly on elephants.[4]

The cosmic cock later became a familiar conception in Islam, undoubtedly influenced by Jewish ideas about the *ziz* but not exclusively, since the rabbis' references to the bird strongly suggest the traces of a popular folk tradition.[5] The Moslem traditions describe the cosmic cock as a bird whose wings reach from the east to the west. It stands on the lowest earth, its head bowed under the throne of God. Every night it summons mankind to prayer three times. When the earthly cocks hear the sound of this great white cock, they beat their wings and crow in chorus. When the day of resurrection comes, God will say to this giant bird; "Take thy wings in and lower thy voice, that the inhabitants of heaven and earth know that the hour is near".[6] In the summons to prayer taken over by the earthly cocks, we can clearly detect the Persian ideas about the function of *parôdars*.

All these points make it virtually certain that the author of the

[1] See Ch. Pellat, '*anḳa*', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New ed., Leiden-London, 1960, 509.

[2] See A. J. Wensinck, *Tree and Bird as cosmological symbols in Western Asia*, in *Verhandelingen der Kon. Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam*, Afd. Letterkunde, Amsterdam, 1921, 40.

[3] For *simurgh*, see Wensinck, 41-42, for *garuda* e.g. F. D. K. Bosch, *The golden germs. An introduction to Indian symbolism*, The Hague, 1960, 149-150.

[4] For *simurgh-'anḳa'*, see Henrichsen, II, 30; for *garuda, Mahabharata*, 29, trans. Chandra Ray, 97-102.

[5] They often mention the bird without details, evidently assuming these to be known; *cf.* e.g. *Midrash Numbers*, 21, 18 *(ziz)*, and *Sukkah*, 5a, *Yoma*, 80a (*bar-yokni*). But Wensinck (p. 37) says: "The origin of Muslim tradition in this point is to be found in Jewish folklore", and then cites the *Targum* on *Ps*. l.11.

[6] Wensinck, 36; J. A. Janssen, *Le coq et la pluie dans la tradition palestinienne*, in *Rev. Biblique*, 33, 1924, 574-582; *cf.* also H. Gressmann, *Der heilige Hahn zu Hieropolis in Syrien*, in *Beiheft ZAW*, 41, 1925, 88-95.

Greek Apocalypse of Baruch made use of an oriental tradition, also known to the Jews, concerning a huge bird capable of covering the sky with its wings and thus robbing the sun of its worst intensity. The writer used this tradition to illustrate God's mercy and His dominion even over the sun. We have seen that the origin of this conception must be sought mainly in Persia. This origin is also conveyed by the 365 gates of heaven, which is a typically Persian idea.[1] In this apocalypse the bird of the sun carries the name, so familiar to the Greeks, of "phoenix", even though these particular conceptions were not reconcilable with the Classical traditions concerning the phoenix. The phoenix of Pseudo-Baruch is the oriental heavenly singer and seer, the cosmic cock. This also clarifies the relationship with the earthly cocks: the sound made by the phoenix to awaken the cocks is the summons to the sun mentioned just before that: "Giver of light, give thy light to the world".[2]

Nevertheless, Pseudo-Baruch was not the first to call the daily companion of the sun "phoenix". An earlier case is found in a fragment, preserved in Charisius, of the poem *Pterygion phoenicis* by the poet Laevius, who lived around 100 B.C.[3] In his collection of poetry entitled *Erotopaegnia* in which this poem occurred, Laevius had experimented with the artificial verse form of the *Technopaegnia*, first applied by Simias of Rhodes at the beginning of the Hellenistic period.[4] In this form the poem is constructed in such a way that

[1] *Cf.* M. P. Nilsson, review of Hubaux and Leroy, in *Gnomon*, 17, 1941, 213-214.

[2] See p. 262. Cumont, *Textes et monuments*, I, 44, 125, 173, n. 2, thinks that the details in the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, concerning the sun's course, the cocks and the sun's crown which is renewed daily, are to be traced to Persian influences. Ginzberg, V, 48, did the same for the idea that the wings of the *ziz* eclipse the sun; but neither author gives textual evidence.

[3] On Laevius in general: W. Kroll, *Laevius*, in *RE*, 12, 1925, 452-454, M. Schanz-C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, I, (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, VIII, 1), Munster, 1927, 268-271, and H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue*, I, Paris, 1952, 189-195. On *Pterygion phoenicis* in particular: O. Ribbeck, *Geschichte der römischen Dichtung*, I, Stuttgart, 1887, 304, H. de la Ville de Mirmont, *Études sur l'ancienne poésie latine*, Paris, 1903, 293-306, F. Leo, *Die römische Dichtung in der sullanischen Zeit*, in *Hermes*, 49, 1914, 183, Hubaux and Leroy, 4-6.

[4] On the *Technopaegnia*, and its poets, see A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1963, 776 and Ribbeck, 304; *cf. Anthologia Graeca*, XV, 21, 22, 24-27. On Simias, U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf,

the length of its lines creates the outline of its subject. A poem by Simias, for instance, concerns the wings of Eros and thus has the shape of a pair of wings. The special "amusement" of this arrangement was that the reader was supposed to peruse the poem as though it were an inscription on Eros' wings.[1] Laevius had the same intention in his poem on the phoenix: like the Eros of Simias, his phoenix speaks of itself on its wings. We have seen that according to the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, the wings of the phoenix bore an inscription in which the bird speaks of its origin in mysterious words.[2] This raises the question of whether Pseudo-Baruch knew a Greek poem about the phoenix in which the bird spoke of itself in the technopaegnic verse form and which could have suggested the remarkable inscription to him. If this was the case, Laevius must have borrowed not only the verse form but also the subject of his poem from a Greek example. His phoenix too speaks of itself, and in doing so uses the feminine gender, indicating that Laevius must have considered the bird to be a female creature.[3] The fragment reads: "O Venus, who nourishes love and rouses desire, by whose favour a clear day stretches before me, your follower and your maid servant...".[4]

It need not be inferred from this passage that the phoenix was

Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1962, 111-113.

[1] *Anthologia Graeca*, XV, 24; in the codex Laurentianus, Eros is shown with the poem on its wings, see H. Beckby, *Anthologia Graeca, griechisch-deutsch*, IV, Munich, 1958, 537; for the humorous meaning, see also Leo, 183, n. 1.

[2] See p. 262. Hubaux and Leroy, 4, n. 3 also referred to this in connection with Laevius.

[3] For the phoenix as female animal, see p. 360, n. 4. H. de la Ville de Mirmont thought the phoenix to be the speaker, but wondered how Laevius could make the sun bird a servant of Venus (p. 301, 302). F. Leo, *o.c.*, 183, n. 1, concluded that the servant of Venus could not be the phoenix, "*denn der ist männlich und Vogel der Sonne*", and since Laevius clearly followed Simias' literary joke, he concluded: "*Man sieht also nicht warum das Gedicht Pterygion Phoenicis heisst*".

[4] Laevius, *frg.* 22: *Venus, (o) amoris altrix, genetrix cupiditatis, mihi quae diem serenum hilarula praepandere cresti, opseculae tuae ac ministrae...* According to Ribbeck, 304, it is the first two verses; he calls it "*ein hohles, mark- und seeleloses Wortgeklingel*"!

consecrated to Venus as well as to the sun.[1] The *Erotopaegnia* were amorous poems, and in the *Pterygion phoenicis* Laevius was evidently making a play on the two aspects of Venus—as morning star and goddess of Love. The meaning of these lines may be this: just as the phoenix may be called a follower of Venus because he rises with the sun after the morning star has announced the new day, so too is the poet a follower of Venus on the path of love and her faithful servant; he is grateful to her because she has prepared for him a splendid day that he can spend in her service. It is conceivable that in the lost portion of his ambiguous poem Laevius drew a clearer picture of the phoenix as bird of the sun, but in any case the lines quoted in Charisius give the impression that he knew the image of the phoenix as escort of the sun.

It would seem reasonable to assume that either Laevius or his source transposed to the phoenix a conception originally belonging to the eagle. Superficial examination of the beautiful decadrachma struck around 410 B.C. in Akragas (Agrigentum) might suggest that the conception of the eagle as escort of the chariot of the sun must have been known even this early in Classical times. The coin shows a four-horse chariot being drawn at full speed, a large eagle above the horses and under their hooves a crab. Although it has been assumed that the charioteer is Helios, this cannot be considered very probable.[2] In any case, in this representation the eagle is certainly not directly concerned with the main subject, because it is known that this bird and the crab were the preferred emblems of the city of Akragas, as can be seen from coins minted as much as a hundred years earlier.[3] In the time of the late Empire the funerary symbolism indeed included the combination of the eagle and the chariot of the sun travelling upward with the soul of the deceased. According to Cumont, this represents the merging of two originally oriental conceptions, i.e. that the deceased is carried to heaven by the eagle,

[1] See p. 269, n. 3. Hubaux and Leroy, 5, think Laevius shows that the phoenix was also a symbol of Venus, as indicated for example by Claudian, *Phoenix*, 17-20 (without justification; see p. 237 here).

[2] Ch. Seltman, *Masterpieces of Greek coinage*, Oxford, 1949, 105, shown on pl. 45b; other opinions in L. and M. Lanckoroński, *Mythen und Münzen*, Munich, 1958, 40-42, fig. 9.

[3] Seltman, 102; Lanckoroński, 42.

which was seen as sun bird mainly in Syria, and by a vehicle identified with the solar chariot.[1] But in this combined form it is a rare representation known so far only from a diptychon dating from the middle of the fifth century of the present era and showing the apotheosis of an emperor: the dead ruler is seen mounting skyward in a chariot drawn by four horses, two large eagles emerging from the funeral pyre to escort the chariot.[2] Here, however, the birds form a distinct reference to the eagle released from the pyre at the consecration of an emperor and which was considered to transport the soul of the deceased to heaven.[3] The combination of the eagle and the chariot of the sun is thus not encountered until late in Classical times and without a known pre-existent tradition. It is of course conceivable that old oriental images persisted in the Roman funerary symbolism and that there was in this way a distant connection with the ideas of Pseudo-Baruch, but this cannot be proven and is also rather improbable.

The relationship seemingly drawn between the eagle and Venus on the stele of Albano is again determined by a combination of related ideas. The stele shows a horse ridden by the deceased and led upwards by an eagle holding its rein. The inscription conveys that the relief depicts the soul of a two years old child who, conveyed by the eagle of Zeus, is to become the companion of the morning and evening star. This star is indeed shown above the child's head.[4] Thus, we see here the horse and the eagle, each of which was thought to convey souls to heaven, represented together. Venus-Phosphorus was also seen on the one hand as the escort of, for instance, the horse and the solar chariot, and on the other as the abode of blessed souls.[5] The stele of Albano therefore demonstrates a combination of three related but originally independent elements, and thus does not supply any evidence of an earlier relationship between the eagle and Venus.

[1] For these ideas, see F. Cumont, *L'aigle funéraire de Hieropolis et l'apothéose des empereurs*, in his *Études syriennes*, Paris, 1917, 35-118 and his last considerations in *Lux perpetua*, 289-297.

[2] Cumont, *L'aigle funéraire*, 101, *Lux perpetua*, 296-297, with a good illustration in his *Recherches*, pl. XIV, b, discussion on p. 176.

[3] Cumont, *L'aigle funéraire*, 72, n. 3, *Lux perpetua*, 296.

[4] Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, 297, and pl. II; see also p. 248 here.

[5] Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, 184, n. 1 and *Recherches*, 84, n. 8, and 248.

On the whole, therefore, it is highly improbable that in his poem Laevius drew on a tradition known to the Classical world concerning the eagle as bird of the sun; had he done so, furthermore, the transposition to the phoenix would be impossible to explain. The most likely assumption is therefore that he made use of the oriental conception of a huge bird which escorted the sun each day and which must therefore have been identified with the Classical phoenix long before the time of Pseudo-Baruch.

The fact that a bird unknown to the Classical world is concerned here also explains why we find the same details applied to the griffin in later texts having no dependence on the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*: in these cases the oriental tradition was applied to another fabulous creature known to the Greeks. This holds in the first place for the *Byzantine Physiologus*. This text says that at the moment in the morning when the sun lets its rays fall on the earth, the griffin spreads its wings to catch the rays to prevent the whole world from burning up. Undoubtedly there was originally only one griffin involved, but the redactor rather unexpectedly added a second to make the story more suitable for the explanation he intended to give it. What he says is that another griffin goes along to the west, and that on the wings of this bird are the words: "Come, giver of light, give thy light to the world!" In the symbolic interpretation given at the end of this chapter the rays of the sun are explained as God's wrath, the two griffins being the Archangel Michael and the holy Theotokos Mary, who prevent God from destroying the world.[1] The only difference between the essential details is that here the griffin bears the summons to the sun on its wings, whereas the phoenix of Pseudo-Baruch carries in that place an indication pertaining

[1] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 6: ἁπλώνει ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ ὁ αὐτὸς γρύψ, καὶ δέχεται τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου φλέξεις, ἵνα μὴ κατακαύσῃ τὴν οἰκουμενικὴν γῆν. καὶ ἕτερος γρὺψ συμπορεύεται ἕως δυσμάς, ὡς καὶ γεγράπται ἐν ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ "πορεύου φωτοδότα, δὸς τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φῶς". In connection with Pseudo-Baruch, the first to refer to this text was M. R. James, *Notes on Apocrypha, VI: Traces of the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch in other writings*, in *JThS*, 16, 1915, 410-413. Hubaux and Leroy, 8, n. 2 referred independently to this text, following the text published by A. Moustoxydes, Συλλογὴ ἀνεκδότων, Venice, 1817 and 1826, 13; in the manuscript he reproduced, the two griffins were related to the archangels Michael and Gabriel; see also the critical apparatus in Sbordone's edition, 183.

to its origin. The reaction of the cocks is omitted in the *Physiologus*.

With small discrepancies and additions this same tradition concerning the griffin is found in an astrological manuscript kept in Leningrad. In this text it is said that in the morning the turning vault of heaven brings the sun to the east, in Eden, to the highest portion of the earth, opposite Paradise. Arriving at the same time as the sun is a bird called the griffin, which is 200 ells tall. This bird takes a position opposite the stallions drawing the chariot of the sun and sprays the sun's rays with water to prevent them from burning up the earth. The griffin becomes burning hot and its feathers fall out, but it restores itself completely by submerging itself in the Nile, an event which is repeated each day. In a rather obscure way the cocks are related to the sun bird here too: something presses the cock under its wing so that it knows it is time to crow. Lastly, it is said that God's throne has 365 gates and that the sun appears through a different one each day.[1] This last element from the oriental tradition concerning the sun bird we have also encountered in Pseudo-Baruch, albeit in a more corrupt form, since this author has all of the 365 gates open at the same time.[2]

According to the astrologer, the griffin tempers the sun's rays not by catching them with its wings but by sprinkling them with water. In addition, we find here for the first time a reference to the indispensable daily renewal of the sun bird, which must also have been assumed by Pseudo-Baruch: the heat is so great that it loses its feathers, but it renews itself by immersing itself in the Nile.[3] Re-

[1] M. A. F. Sangin, *Catalogus codicum astrologorum Graecorum*, XII, Brussels, 1936, 107: ... ὀνομά τοῦ γρύψ, τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ πηχῶν διακοσίων, ἀρρενικοῖς ἵπποις ἀντικαθήμενος καὶ ῥαντίζει τὰς ἀκτῖνας τοῦ ἡλίου πρὸς τὸ μὴ κατακαῦσαι τὴν γῆν, καὶ ζεματίζεται καὶ πίπτον τὰ πτερά τοῦ καὶ πάλιν βαπτίζεται εἰς τὸν Νεῖλον τὸν ποταμὸν καὶ γίνεται ὡς τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν· καὶ ἐν τῇ πτέρυγι αὐτοῦ συνέχει ὁ ἀλέκτωρ καὶ γινώσκει περὶ τῆς ὥρας καὶ κελαδεῖ. Ὁ δὲ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει πύλας τξε΄, καὶ πορεύεται κάθε ἡμέραν πύλην μίαν ... ⟨καὶ⟩ λαμβάνει ὁ ἥλιος τὸ φῶς ἀπὸ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου. See also Hubaux and Leroy, 8.

[2] See p. 262. The *Physiologus of Vienna*, 5, in which the tradition concerning the phoenix-griffin reverberates distinctly (see below, p. 278), says that the bird had 365 feathers: τὰ πτερὰ στρογγύλα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τξε΄.

[3] *Cf.* καὶ γίνεται ὡς τὸ πρῶτον with similar statements about the phoenix, p. 222, n. 2. The Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* mentions only the refurbishing of the crown of the sun, but the indispensable renewal of the phoenix is implied.

lated conceptions are found in the so-called *Disputatio Panagiotae cum Azymita*. This Byzantine text contains a fictitious conversation supposed to have taken place between an orthodox Greek called Constantine and an "Azymite", a Roman cardinal, at the Council of Lyons in 1274. Thus, this book probably originated in the last decades of the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, no good critical edition of the text is available, and we are limited to rather widely divergent editions.[1]

In answer to a question from the cardinal about the sun's course, Constantine answers that the sun is accompanied during the day by 150,000 angels and during the night by 10,000.[2] When the sun sets they remove his divine garments and carry them to the life-giving Christ.[3] With the sea, which flows from west to east, the sun returns to the place where he rises. Early in the morning Christ gives the crown[4] of the sun back to the angels, which place it on the sun, who then rises.

At that moment two birds referred to as griffins appear, one called phoenix and the other *chaledris*. These birds are nine ells tall and they moisten the sun to prevent the world from being burned up.[5]

[1] For this work see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, XII, 2, 1), Munich, 1959, 680. The edition he mentions of N. Krasnosel'cev in *Lětopis' Istoriko-filologičeskago obščestva pri novorossijskom universitete*, Viz. Otd., Odessa, 3, 1896, 295-328 (for the phoenix see 319-320) does give some variants but can hardly be called critical. The *Disputatio* was first referred to by James, in his edition of the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, LXV, in which he cited the relevant passage, following the edition of A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, I, Moscow, 1893, 184; unfortunately, I have been unable to gain access to this edition.

[2] Krasnosel'cev, 319: Καὶ ὁδηγοῦν αὐτὸν τὴν ἡμέραν ιε' μυριάδες ... ἄγγελοι καὶ τὰς νύκτας χιλιάδες ι'. Vassiliev, 184, in James, LXV, has: τὴν ἡμέραν δεκαπέντε χιλιάδες ἄγγελοι.

[3] Vassiliev, 184, in James, LXV: ὅταν βασιλεύῃ ὁ ἥλιος, ἐκδύουσιν αὐτὸν οἱ ἄγγελοι καὶ παραδίδουσιν τὰς θείας στολὰς αὐτοῦ τὸν ζωοδότην μου Χριστόν; this last is missing in Krasnosel'cev, 320.

[4] Krasnosel'cev, 320: στερέωμα instead of στέμμα.

[5] Vassiliev, 184, in James, LXV: ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος δίδει τὸ στέμμα τῶν ἀγγέλων (Krasnosel'cev, 320: τοὺς ἀγγέλους) καὶ ἐνδύουσιν τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἀνατέλλει· καὶ εὐθὺς δύο ὄρνεα καλούμενα γρύψι, τὸ ἓν καλεῖται φίριξ (= φοῖνιξ) καὶ τὸ ἕτερον χαλέδρις, ὡς ἀπὸ πηχῶν ἐννέα, καὶ βρέχουσιν τὸν ἥλιον ἵνα μὴ καύσῃ τὸν κόσμον. Another text reads, according to Krasnosel'cev, 320, n. 3: εὐθὺς ὄρνεα πτερωτὰ ὡς φοῖνιξ καὶ χαλκηδόνες.

In another version the birds are two heavenly angels which wet their wings in the Ocean and then extinguish the sun.[1] The proof that this is not the original version lies in the fact that a little further on in this text birds are nevertheless mentioned. But we shall see that a related concept occurred as early as in Proclus.[2] The *Disputatio* goes on to report that the wings of the birds become charred, leaving only the flesh. After this, they return to the Ocean, immerse themselves, and recover their feathers. These birds formed the model for the cocks, whose nature earned them the same name.[3] This is why the cock is called the prophet among the birds. The blood in its wings is very warm, which disturbs it; it becomes so hot that it awakens and spreads its wings. In this way it knows in advance that the two birds mentioned above are about to spread their wings. It begins to crow, recalling Christ the while.[4] In answer to the Azymite's question about what the cocks cry in the morning, Constantine answers that one cries "Come", the second "Giver of light", the third "Give thy light", and the fourth "To the world".[5]

In this text the separate, albeit essentially identical, traditions concerning the phoenix and the griffin are combined. The phoenix thus becomes a special kind of griffin that, together with another griffin called *chaledris*, tempers the heat of the sun. This *Disputatio*

[1] Krasnosel'cev, p. 320: καὶ εὐθὺς δύο ἄγγελοι οὐράνιοι βρέχουσι τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν ὠκεανὸν ποταμόν. καὶ κατασβένουσι τὸν ἥλιον εἰς πᾶν ἵνα μὴ κατακαύσῃ τὸν κόσμον.

[2] See p. 276.

[3] Vassiliev, 184, in James, LXV: καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς καίονται αἱ πτέρυγες τῶν ὀρνέων καὶ ἀπομένουσιν μόνον τὰ κρέη καὶ πάλιν ὑπάγουσιν εἰς τὸν ὠκεανὸν καὶ λούονται καὶ πάλιν πτεροῦνται, καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν τῶν ὀρνέων ἐπαίρνουσιν μίμησιν οἱ ἀλέκτορες καὶ ὀνομάζονται καὶ αὐτὰ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν. In Krasnosel'cev the last sentence is replaced by the one in the following note.

[4] Krasnosel'cev, 320: διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ πετεινὸς καὶ αὐτὸς προφήτης ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρνέων ὀνομάζεται· ἔχει αἷμα εἰς τὴν ἀμασχάλην αὐτοῦ θερμὸν πάνυ καὶ τότε κρούγει τὸν καὶ πνίγεταί καὶ ἐξυσπαζόμενον καὶ ἐξυπνῶν κρούει τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος καὶ ἐξυπνᾷ καὶ προγνώθει τοὺς κτύπους τῶν ὀρνέων ἐκείνων τῶν πτερύγων καὶ βοῶσι σημαίνοντος τὴν ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ. James, LXV, gives only a summary of this text: *"He goes on to say that cocks have a certain vein under their wings which tickles them and makes them crow"*.

[5] Krasnosel'cev, 320: Ὁ Ἀζυμίτης· καὶ τί λέγει ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ πετεινοῦ; ὁ Παναγιώτης· ὁ εἷς λέγει· "Πορεύου", ὁ ἕτερος "φωτοδότα" ὁ τρίτος "δὸς τὸ φῶς", ὁ τέταρτος· "τὸν κόσμον".

version developed because its author connected the tradition of the two griffins—also rather unsuccessfully employed in the *Byzantine Physiologus*—with related details in the so-called *Slavonic Enoch*, as will become evident from the discussion of the latter.[1]

In the *Disputatio* the connection between the sun birds and the cocks is stressed even more strongly than in the other texts just mentioned. According to the former, the cocks cry in chorus: "Come, giver of light, give thy light to the world", and, as we shall see, the same occurs in the *Slavonic Enoch*.[2] We have seen that according to the *Byzantine Physiologus* these words occur on the griffin's wings, whereas in the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* they seem to have been uttered by the phoenix itself. These texts supplement each other: the original meaning must have been that the cocks take over the summons uttered by the sun bird(s). This is why the *Disputatio* says that the earthly cocks are an imitation of the sun birds and that they are identified with the latter by reason of their nature. This is an unequivocal indication that the oriental cosmic cock underlies the phoenix-griffin. The former has been preserved in a pure form in an Armenian folk tradition according to which in the early morning the great heavenly cock crows first, after which the choirs of angels begin to praise God. This is heard by the cocks on earth, which rouse mankind and praise God.[3] From a passage in Proclus' *De arte sacra* it is evident that the concept of more than a single heavenly cock was also known. After having said that the cock knows the courses of the sun and sings a hymn to the approaching "giver of light", Proclus remarks, apparently with the purpose of explaining this knowledge of the cock: "This is why there were several sun angels with a similar appearance [i.e. to that of the cocks]; although they actually do not possess a shape, they appear in this way to us, who are enclosed in a shape."[4] These last words

[1] See p. 303.

[2] See p. 292. F. C. Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, (The Schweich lectures, 1913), London, 1914, 76, n. 1, followed by James, (see p. 272, n. 1), 413, thought the cock's words were meant to imitate the crowing of a cock.

[3] See M. Abeghian, *Der armenische Volksglaube*, Thesis Jena, Leipzig, 1899, 38, also in Gray, (see p. 266, n. 1), 695.

[4] Proclus, *De arte sacra*, (ed. J. Bidez, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, VI, Brussels, 1928, 150): διὸ καὶ ἄγγελοί τινες ἡλιακοὶ ὤφθησαν τοιαύτας

show that the current conception of the sun birds offered certain difficulties for Proclus, but for the rest his comment reveals his knowledge of a conception occupying an intermediate position between the oriental idea of the single cosmic cock and that of the two griffins in the *Byzantine Physiologus* and the *Disputatio*. According to Proclus, the cosmic cocks are angels. We have encountered the same idea in one of the versions of the *Disputatio*,[1] and it must also have influenced the copyist of the *Byzantine Physiologus* who related the two griffins mentioned there to the archangels Michael and Gabriel.[2] In a passage in the Slavonic Henoch to be discussed below, the phoenix is also included among the angels, clearly under the influence of the cosmic cock.[3]

Thus, the arrival of the sun bird(s) causes the cocks on earth to stir and announce the new day. In the *Disputatio* we also find the remarkable conception that the cocks are so irritated by a vein carrying hot blood, and become so warm that they awaken, spread their wings, and begin to crow. The same idea must have underlain the rather cryptic mention of the awakening of the cocks in the astrological text.[4] In Heliodorus there are two possible explanations of the crowing of the cocks before sunrise: an instinctive knowledge of the sun's return incites them to greet the god, or the heat and the wish to move about and be fed leads them to crow and thus awaken the household.[5] Heliodorus must therefore have been aware of the

ἔχοντες μορφάς, καὶ ὄντες ἀμόρφωτοι, φαίνονται τοῖς ἐν μορφῇ κατεχομένοις ἡμῖν μεμορφωμένοι.

[1] See p. 275, n. 1.

[2] See p. 272 n. 1.

[3] See p. 290.

[4] Hubaux and Leroy, 8, translate ἐν τῇ πτέρυγι αὐτοῦ συνέχει ὁ ἀλέκτωρ (see p. 273, n. 1) as *sous son aille se tient le coq*, thus making αὐτοῦ pertain to the griffin. But the transition is abrupt and the text awkward; probably the author himself was no longer certain what was meant. A related conception is found in *Zohar*, Wayikra, III, 22b, 23a, according to L. Ginzberg, *Cock*, in *The Jewish encyclopedia*, IV, 1905, 139: when God visits Paradise at night to converse with the souls of the pious, there arises from that place a flame that touches the wings of the cock, which thereupon begins to praise God and to awaken the people to do the same. *Cf.* also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, I, 44-45, V, 61-62, n. 194 and Gray, (see p. 266, n. 1), 695.

[5] Heliodorus, *Aëthiopica*, I, 18: εἴτε ὡς λόγος, αἰσθήσει φυσικῇ τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου καθ' ἡμᾶς περιστροφῆς ... εἴτε ὑπὸ θερμότητος ἅμα καὶ τῆς περὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι καὶ σιτεῖσθαι θᾶττον ἐπιθυμίας. *Cf.* however, Democritus in Cicero, *De divin.*,

conception that the cock becomes warm before sunrise and starts to move, and it is possible, although not certain, that he also knew the theory concerning the warmer blood in the wing.

All this also serves to clarify a passage in the *Physiologus of Vienna*. In this text the phoenix's daily flight with the sun is not explicitly mentioned but is certainly implied: when the bird stands rejuvenated on the shore of the Ocean early in the morning and begins to move, all the birds begin to move with it, ruffling their feathers and making a soft murmuring sound at the same time. But the cock becomes warm, puffs out its feathers, and cannot bear the heat; it spreads its wings, catches the wind in them, beats them and cries out; in short, it crows.[1] Just as in the *Disputatio* and the astrological work in Leningrad, here too the crowing of the cock is related to the appearance of the phoenix and the cock's becoming warm. At the beginning of this confused compilation of many different phoenix traditions it is also said that the phoenix acquired its name because, via the cocks, it "makes the night bright", i.e. turns the night to day.[2]

Only the *Disputatio* and the astrologer speak of the daily renewal of the sun birds. Because of the terrible heat to which they are exposed throughout the day, they have lost their feathers before night falls; to this the *Disputatio* explicitly adds that only flesh remains. In both cases they are renewed by immersing themselves in water, according to the astrologer that of the Nile and according to the *Disputatio* that of the Ocean. The same conception also occurs in a distorted form in the *Physiologus of Vienna*: from midnight to sunrise the bird exposes itself to the heat of the sun, is warmed by it, and grows new feathers.[3] The motif of the immersion also

II, 57: *depulso enim de pectore et in omne corpus diviso et mitificato cibo cantus edere quiete satiatos*, *cf.* D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, *A glossary of Greek birds*, 2nd ed., London, 1936, 39.

[1] *Physiologus of Vienna*, 10-15: ἔξω ἐπὶ τὴν ξηρὰν καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ πτερυσσομένου καὶ κινουμένου συγκινεῖσθαι καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄρνεα καὶ σαλεύεσθαι, ὑπογογγύζειν τε καὶ μουρμουρίζειν καθ᾽ ἑαυτὰ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ, καὶ τὸν ἀλεκτρυόνα ἀναθερμαίνεσθαι καὶ ὀρθοτριχιᾶν καὶ μὴ φέρειν τὸ θαλπόν, ἀλλὰ ἐκπετᾶν καὶ ἀνεμίζεσθαι καὶ τύπτειν τὰς πτέρυγας καὶ βοᾶν, ἤτοι ᾄδειν.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1: Φοῖνιξ ὅτι φανεροποιεῖ διὰ τῶν ἀλεκτρυόνων τὴν νύκτα.

[3] *Ibid.*, 8-11: καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀνιέναι τὸν ἥλιον τὸ μεσονύκτιον ἐπὶ τὸν ἀνατολικὸν πύλον, ἀπὸ τότε ἐκφέρεσθαι τὴν θέρμην τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ θερμαίνεσθαι τὸν φοίνικα καὶ ἀναπτερύσσεσθαι καθ᾽ ἑαυτόν.

occurs in this text, but with a remarkable twist: toward the end of the passage it is said that once the sun has risen the phoenix can no longer bear the heat and consequently submerges itself in the Ocean until the sun goes down.[1] It is clear that the compiler of this text must have drawn on a source in which the phoenix was described as the daily companion of the sun and as the protector of life on earth.

The motif of the immersion is also found in one tradition concerning the rejuvenation of the eagle. In connection with the well-known text of *Ps.* cii. 5 (LXX): "...thy youth shall be renewed like an eagle's", the *Physiologus* says that the old eagle, whose wings have become heavy and the sight weak,[2] seeks a clear spring and then flies to the heaven of the sun. There it burns its old feathers and regains its sharp sight, after which it submerges itself three times in the spring; in this way it renews itself and becomes young again.[3] Here, as for the phoenix-griffin, we have the combination of the burning of the feathers by the sun and the renewal by immersion. In all probability the raising of the immersions to three was done by the redactor of the *Physiologus* to provide an opportunity for a symbolic explanation, since he relates this point to Christian baptism.[4]

[1] *Ibid.*, 29-32: μὴ φέρων ὁ φοῖνιξ τὴν θερμότητα τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ ἡλίου, ὑποδύει ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν ὠκεανόν, ἕως ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ μεγέθη τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περάσας, ἐπὶ τὰς ζώνας περιβάλλῃ, καὶ μηκύνῃ ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ὠκεανείων γαιῶν. It is said in a scholion on Persius, I, 46, that the phoenix burns itself at sunset and arises from its ashes with the rising sun. This contains the echo of the tradition discussed here of the phoenix as bird of the sun, albeit that the daily renewal is combined with the Classical story of the burning; see also p. 209.

[2] For the agreement between the phoenix and the eagle on this point, see p. 161.

[3] *Physiologus*, 6: ὅταν γηράσῃ, βαρύνονται αὐτοῦ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ αἱ πτέρυγες καὶ ἀμβλυωπεῖ. τί οὖν ποιεῖ; ζητεῖ πηγὴν ὕδατος καθαράν, καὶ ἀνίπταται εἰς τὸν αἰθέρα τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ καίει τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ τὰς παλαιὰς καὶ τὴν ἀμαυρίαν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ καταβαίνει ἐπὶ τὴν πηγήν, καὶ βαπτίζεται τρίς, καὶ ἀνακαινίζεται, καὶ νέος γίνεται. For the age and renewal of the eagle, see Hubaux and Leroy, 136-140.

[4] *Physiologus*, 6: καὶ βάπτισαι τρὶς ἐν τῇ ἀεννάῳ πηγῇ, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Ambrose, *De paenitentia*, II, 2, 8 also cites, in the discussion of the renewal by baptism, *Ps.* ciii.5; he does not give, however, the explanation of the *Physiologus* but assumes for the eagle the renewal of the phoenix: *quod etiam aquila, cum fuerit mortua, ex suis*

Classical physiology did know a tradition concerning the old age of the eagle, but without its rejuvenation by burning and immersion.[1] These elements are, however, encountered in the Arabian reports on the *nasr* and the *ʿuḳâb*, usually interpreted as the eagle and the vulture. According to Damîrî, the eagle flies from the east to the west in a single day.[2] He does not say that the bird does this each day, but the agreement with the tradition concerning the phoenix-griffin on this point is nevertheless striking. According to another source, it comes so close to the sun that it must, like the griffins of the *Disputatio*, submerge itself in the Ocean, where it revives and regains its youth.[3] Ḳazwînî tells the same things about the vulture *(ʿuḳâb)* as the *Physiologus* says about the eagle: when its eyes are weakened by age it flies upward until its feathers are burned; then it descends and immerses itself several times in a spring from which it rises young and refreshed.[4] Damîrî offers the variant that the old vulture is brought to a spring by its young and there rejuvenates itself by bathing in its water.[5] Even if it is taken to be probable that Ḳazwînî drew on an Arabic *Physiologus* for the passage on the vulture just referred to, it must still be considered unlikely that the related traditions concerning the renewal of the griffin-phoenix, the eagle, and the vulture are all to be traced to the reports on the eagle in the *Physiologus*. It seems more likely that the burning of the plumage and the rejuvenation by immersion belonged originally only to the oriental tradition of the sun bird

reliquiis renascitur. According to a late *Physiologus*, (ed. Sbordone, 314) the eagle, like the phoenix, lives 500 years.

[1] According to Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.*, IX, 32 (619a) and Pliny, X 15, the beak of the old eagle becomes so severely hooked that the bird finally dies of starvation; *cf.* Thompson, *Glossary of Greek birds*, 10 and Hubaux and Leroy, 136, who also (p. 137) refer to the appropriate form of renewal in Augustine, *Enarratio in Ps. cii*, 9 (*PL* 37, 1323-1324): the eagle beats its hooked beak against a stone to free itself of the deformation threatening it with death. In the *Byzantine Physiologus*, 8, both forms of renewal are connected (i.e. beating against a rock and submersion), whereas the eagle, perched on a rock, renews its eyes by the heat of the sun.

[2] Damîrî, II, 403 according to Wensinck, *Tree and bird*, (see p. 267, n. 2), 38.

[3] Wensinck, 38.

[4] Ḳazwînî, 418, according to Wensinck, 39.

[5] Damîrî, II, 146 according to Wensinck, 39.

accompanying the sun, since it is only there that these elements have a natural and organic place: the burning is unavoidable and the daily renewal imperative. This is the source from which this form of rejuvenation must have been tranferred to other sun birds, including the eagle.

All this makes it possible to explain a passage in *De ave phoenice* of Lactantius, a passage which until now has given scholars a great many problems. Lactantius says that before sunrise the phoenix repeatedly immerses itself in the spring of living water located in the grove of the sun. It seems certain that Lactantius took these elements from the above-discussed oriental tradition concerning the sun bird—phoenix or griffin—which accompanies the sun. This impression is immediately created by the verses introducing the passage in question: the phoenix is called a memorable follower or attendant of the sun, submissive to Phoebus and obedient to him—as imposed on it by Mother Nature.[1] The unsuspecting reader might take this to be a somewhat circumstantial parallel of the statement made by Achilles Tatius that the sun is the lord of the phoenix.[2] But in the light of the foregoing discussion it is impossible not to see in his choice of wording, in which the concept "follow" resonates, a reminiscence of the conception that the phoenix is the daily companion of the sun. This is supported by a comparison of Lactantius' words on the command of Mother Nature with Pseudo-Baruch's statement that God had appointed the bird to its protective task.[3] But since Lactantius followed the Classical tradition of the burning after a thousand years,[4] he could only incorporate the oriental conception of the sun bird, which implies a daily renewal, in a severely modified form. This is immediately evident from his careful choice of words—still betraying the original conception—in speaking about the phoenix as servant of the sun, and it is also evident from his treatment of the motives underlying the immersion and the singing of the bird. It will be well to discuss this in more detail.

[1] Lactantius, 33-34: *Paret et obsequitur Phoebo memoranda satelles:/hoc natura parens munus habere dedit.*

[2] See p. 235.

[3] See p. 262, n. 1.

[4] See p. 69, n. 6.

As soon as the dawn breaks and the stars begin to pale, says Lactantius, the phoenix submerges its body three or four times in the sacred water of the spring, and three or four times it takes a little of the water of life.[1] This closely resembles what the *Byzantine Physiologus* has to say about the eagle, which was supposed to renew itself by submerging itself three times in a pure spring.[2] The agreement between this conception and that concerning the phoenix-griffin has already been analysed above. It is clear that Lactantius drew on this tradition here, but because he had to omit the preceding burning of the feathers of the sun bird, the rejuvenating character of the submersion is lost in his text. Instead, it has become a sacred act recurring each day, thus suggesting an explanation of the long life and virtual immortality of the phoenix.

Lactantius devotes considerable attention to the bird's behaviour after it has completed the rite of immersion. The phoenix rises from the water and settles in the top of a high tree so tall that it looks down over the entire grove.[3] In view of Lactantius' identification of the abode of the phoenix with Paradise,[4] there can be no doubt that we are concerned here with the image of the sun bird on the tree of life, which was especially popular in the oriental world.[5]

On this tree the phoenix, turned toward the east, awaits the rays and the light of the rising sun. As soon as the soft glow of the first light becomes visible, the bird begins to sing a sacred song and to summon the new day with a beautiful sound. This sound cannot be surpassed by either the voice of the nightingale or the flute with its Cirrhaean tones; the same holds for the song of the dying swan and

[1] Lactantius, 35-38: *Lutea cum primum surgens Aurora rubescit, / cum primum rosea sidera luce fugat, / ter quater illa pias inmergit corpus in undas, / ter quater e vivo gurgite libat aquam.*

[2] See p. 279, n. 3.

[3] Lactantius, 39-40: *Tollitur ac summo considit in arboris altae / vertice, quae totum despicit una nemus.*

[4] See p. 311-326.

[5] *Garuda*: Bosch, (see p. 267, n. 3), 149, pl. 47d; *Simurgh*: A. Bricteux, *Histoire de la Sîmourgh...*, in *Le Muséon*, N.S., 6, 1905, 57-58; in *Avesta*, Rashn Yast, X, (17), (trans. Darmesteter, *SBE*, XXIII, Oxford, 1883, 173 and n. 1) the tree of all seeds is called *"the tree of the eagle"* (= *Saêna, Sinamru, simurgh*); see also H. Bergema, *De Boom des Levens in Schrift en Historie*, Thesis Free Univ. Amsterdam, Hilversum, 1938, 416, n. 506. For the eagle stylized as tree, see Wensinck, 43, figs. 30, 31, and 32. According

the melodious strings of the Cyllenian lyre.[1] We have seen that the idea that the sun bird summons the new day as dawn breaks and asks the "light-giver" to bestow his light on the world, formed a permanent element in the tradition concerning the phoenix-griffin, although the descriptions of this summons differ. We shall see that according to the *Slavonic Enoch* too, the phoenix begins to sing at sunrise.[2] The reaction of the cocks on earth to this song is omitted by Lactantius, although the following passage indicates that he was aware of the relationship between the phoenix and the cock. He does not have the cock take up the phoenix's early morning song but, to the contrary, ascribes to the phoenix a diurnal song that other authors assume for the cock.

It was certainly noticed in Classical times, too, that the cock does not crow only at dawn.[3] But on the basis of its morning chant it was seen so predominantly as an indicator of time that its other crowing was considered to occur at regular intervals. Pliny said that during the day the cock crows every three hours, and even long before him the comic poet Cratinus (fifth century B.C.) had said that "the Persian cock" crowed each hour in a loud voice.[4] Lactantius assumes the same thing for the phoenix: once the sun has become entirely visible, the phoenix greets him thrice with a repeated beating of its wings and it remains silent after having worshipped his fiery head thrice in this way; in addition, throughout the day and the night it marks the rapid hours with ineffably beautiful tones. In this con-

to the Germanic mythology too, in the world-tree Yggdrasill there sits an eagle, *cf.*, J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, II, Berlin-Leipzig, 1937, 403.

[1] Lactantius, 41-50: *Et conversa novos Phoebi nascentis ad ortus, / expectat radios et iubar exoriens. / Atque ubi Sol pepulit fulgentis limina portae / et primi emicuit luminis aura levis, / incipit illa sacri modulamina fundere cantus / et mira lucem voce ciere novam, / quam nec aedoniae voces nec tibia possit / musica Cirrhaeis adsimulare modis, / sed neque olor moriens imitari posse putatur / nec Cylleneae fila canora lyrae. Cf.* Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 264: φωνὴν δὲ πάντων εἶχεν ἐκπρεπεστάτην.

[2] See p. 262, 264, 272, 275, 291.

[3] *Cf.* Cicero, *De divinatione*, II, 56: *Quod autem est tempus quo illi non cantent, vel nocturnum vel diurnum?*

[4] Pliny, X, 46: *ternas distinguunt horas interdiu cantu;* Cratinus, in Athenaeus, IX, 374d: ὥσπερ ὁ περσικὸς ὥραν πᾶσαν καναχῶν ὀλόφωνος ἀλέκτωρ; Babrius, 124, 15 calls the cock ὡρόμαντις.

nection Lactantius calls the phoenix the venerable priest of the grove of the sun and the sole initiate of the secrets of Phoebus.[1] It seems certain that Lactantius made use of these conceptions, as indicated by Pliny and Cratinus, to fortify the symbolism of the phoenix he had in mind. The threefold salute to the rising sun may be an allusion to the Early Christian morning-prayers, and the beautiful song indicating the hours may be related to the numerous daily and nightly prayers, which were customary among ascetics in particular. If this assumption is correct, we are concerned here with evidence of the Christian character of *De ave phoenice*.[2]

Reference must be made in this connection to some of the inscriptions associated with the double phoenix in the tomb of the *Valerii* under the Vatican, having to do with the song of the phoenix. If Margherita Guarducci's reading is correct, this Christ-phoenix is spoken to with the words: "Thou singest amid the stars, O celestial bird" and "Thou singest thrice in the early morning".[3] The graffito of the head of Christ with the double phoenix dates from *ca.* A.D. 300.[4] It does not seem impossible that Lactantius' influence is present here. If this were the case, *De ave phoenice* must have been completed before A.D. 300, which is quite possible. But if the writer of these inscriptions was not influenced by the poem, there must have been a tradition that the phoenix sings to and worships the rising sun three times, from which Lactantius too took elements. There is of course no way of obtaining certainty on this point, and it must be kept in mind as well that with respect to the inscriptions we are wholly dependent on the readings of Guarducci.[5]

[1] Lactantius, vss. 51-58: *Postquam Phoebus equos in aperta effudit Olympi, / atque orbem totum protulit usque means, / illa ter alarum repetito verbere plaudit / igniferumque caput ter venerata silet. / Atque eadem celeres etiam discriminat horas / innarrabilibus nocte dieque sonis, / antistes luci nemorumque verenda sacerdos / et sola arcanis conscia, Phoebe, tuis.*

[2] See also p. 320-326, 348-356, 381-385.

[3] M. Guarducci, *Cristo e San Pietro in un documento preconstantiniano della Necropoli Vaticana*, Rome, 1953, 40, 38, *cf.* p. 160 here.

[4] Guarducci, 31, 70.

[5] The inscriptions are virtually impossible to read with the naked eye. See Guarducci, 16 and 17, on their rapidly deteriorating condition. The numerous photographs she made are: "*eseguite con i piú vari mezzi tecnici: luce normale, raggi ultravioletti ed infrarossi, luci monocromatiche*" (p. 16).

We may thus take it as definitely established that the conception of the phoenix as daily companion of the sun, with the related elements of the restorative immersion and the song at dawn, left distinct traces in Lactantius' poem.[1] But it is no longer possible to detect any trace of the actual function assigned to the sun bird(s) in the most important texts: the protection of the earth against destruction by the rays of the sun. According to the *Apocalypse of Baruch* and the *Byzantine Physiologus*, the birds accomplished this by holding back the most extreme heat with their wings and, according to the astrologer of Leningrad and the *Disputatio*, by moistening the rays. For the latter the assumption seems to have been that the birds first dipped their wings in the water by which they had been restored.[2]

This protective function of the sun bird is also indicated in several other texts without mention of the phoenix or the griffin. The Spanish abbot Valerius, who lived at the end of the seventh century, has a certain Balderius tell about a trip he claimed to have made to heaven.[3] When the angels were ready to bring him back, God commanded him to wait because the sun was just about to rise. The brilliance was incomparable, but the sun was preceded by a huge bird. This bird was a shade of red, but its back was darker. By frequently beating its wings, which stirred the air to a loud roar, it tempered the violent heat of the sun. In this way it rapidly passed

[1] There is therefore no reason whatsoever to join Hubaux and Leroy, XII-XIII, in inserting verses 55-90 between verses 34 and 35, see also p. 206, n. 6 and p. 206, n. 1. M. Schuster, *Der Phönix und der Phönixmythos in der Dichtung des Lactantius*, in *Commentationes Vindobonenses*, 2, 1936, 60-63, infers that in the submersion, the song, and the wing-beating of the phoenix and also in the fruit that does not drop (vs. 30), Lactantius was inspired by a large Alexandrian clock: "*man wird dabei geradezu an eine Schwarzwälder Kuckucksuhr erinnert*" (p. 61). Charles, *Apocr. and Pseud*, II, 436 assumes that Lactantius is dependent on *II Enoch;* there is indeed a connection, because in this work we find a variant of the tradition discussed here (see below, p. 291), but there is no direct dependence, because in *II Enoch* the submersion does not occur. Walla, 158-159, refers for the submersion to the *Physiologus of Vienna* and the codex of Leningrad. She considers it impossible to determine whether here Lactantius is dependent on the tradition concerning the cosmic sun bird.

[2] See p. 275. n. 1.

[3] In this context, James, (p. 272, n. 1), 413, was the first to refer to this text.

Balderius and the angels, who began their descent to earth only after this awesome scene had passed out of sight.[1] The description of the appearance of the giant bird is distinctly reminiscent of the Classical descriptions of the phoenix,[2] and the fact that Balderius saw it during a heavenly journey strongly recalls the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*. But this apocalypse cannot have been Valerius' direct source, because he says that the heat of the sun is cooled by the air churned by the bird's wings, whereas in Pseudo-Baruch its wings catch the sun's rays. We must therefore conclude that Valerius must have had the phoenix in mind and that his report is vaguely related to the tradition of the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*.

A reference to the protective function of the sun bird is also made in a fragment of a Coptic Christmas sermon preserved in Turin. In this fragment it is said of Christ: "He who protected all creation with the shadow of His wings to save all from destruction and death, was protected by others when He lay as a stranger in the manger".[3] It seems probable that this writer too was thinking of the phoenix: even already in the Early Church the phoenix was seen as a symbol of Christ, whereas this meaning was given to the griffin only later, in the Middle Ages.[4]

The conceptions concerning the sun bird under discussion undoubtedly also underly the description of the *heliodromus* given in the so-called *Cyranides*. The *heliodromus* is an Indian bird which flies to the rising sun as soon as it is hatched, but which goes to the west as soon as the sun has passed the zenith. It does not live more than a year, and leaves an androgynous progeny behind. It is also

[1] Valerius Abbas, *Opuscula*, 24 (*PL* 87, 436B): *Ante ipsum (sc. solem) autem praecedens ingenti magnitudine avis rufa, et desuper posteriora eius fusco colore fuscata, saepe revoluto alarum remigio crepitanti fragore impulso aere temperabat exaestuantem eiusdem solis ardorem. Quae alacri velocitate properans praeteriit. Post cuius terribilis visionis abscessum coepimus remeare deorsum.*

[2] For this, see p. 253-256.

[3] F. Rossi, *I papiri coptici del Museo Egizio di Torino*, II, 1892, fasc. 2 (1889), 70; Italian, not always accurate, trans. on p. 111; *Deut.* xxxii.11 cannot be the source.

[4] See J. J. M. Timmers, *Symboliek en iconographie der christelijke kunst*, Roermond-Maaseik, 1947, 788, no. 1869 (*cf.* p. 362, no. 745: griffin as symbol of Satan); see also M. Vereno, *Greif*, in *Lexik. f. Theol. und Kirche*, 3rd ed., IV, 1960, 1219-1220. For the phoenix as symbol of Christ, see p. 160, 215.

said that anyone who carries with him the embalmed entrails of this bird will become very wealthy, and anyone who eats of it will be healthy throughout his life.[1] Although not explicitly stated, it is implied that the *heliodromus* ascends each day together with the sun. Its lifespan of a single year shows that it was associated with the annual solar cycle rather than with the sun's daily course over the heavens. The reference to India is equally suggestive of the phoenix and the griffin,[2] and the hermaphroditic offspring recalls the indeterminate sex of the phoenix.[3] For the final element of the fragment we may refer to the use of the ashes of the phoenix for medicinal and magical purposes.[4] This tradition concerning the *heliodromus* seems to be a mixture of Classical phoenix elements and the oriental idea of the bird that escorts the sun along the heavens.

Lastly, we must examine the mentions of the phoenix in the *Book of the secrets of Enoch*, usually called the *Slavonic Enoch* or *II Enoch*.[5] Of this Apocalypse, which is preserved only in Slavonic, a short and a long recension are known, their mutual relationship and age still offering uncertainties. We must go into the present status of research on this subject, because the two texts differ completely with respect to the phoenix. It was long thought that the more extensive text was the oldest and most original, and that it had been written by an Egyptian Jew even before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.[6]

[1] F. de Mély, *Les lapidaires de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, II, Paris, 1898, 89: 'Ηλιοδρόμος ἐστὶ πετηνὸν ἰνδικὸν ὅπερ ἁμὰ γεννηθῇ ἀπίπταται πρὸς τὴν ἀνατολὴν τοῦ ἡλίου· ἅμα δὲ τραπῇ ὁ ἥλιος, αὖθις πρὸς δυσμάς. Οὐ ζῇ δὲ πλέον ἐνιαυτοῦ, ἀλλὰ τεκνογονεῖ ἀρρενοθέλη. (see p. 367 for Festugière's emendation). The first reference to this text in this context was made by Cumont, *Études syriennes*, 57 (58), n. 1; discussed by Hubaux and Leroy, 7-8, who (p. 7, n. 1) also refer to *Papyri graecae magicae*, V, 254 (not 248): ... φοίνικος ἀεροφοιτήτου, in which, however, the escorting of the sun need not be assumed.

[2] For the phoenix, see p. 147; for the griffin, see below p. 304.

[3] See p. 364-366.

[4] See p. 409.

[5] Critical edition and French translation by A. Vaillant, *Le Livre des secrets d'Hénoch*, (Textes publ. par. l'Inst. des Etud. slav., IV), Paris, 1952; older translations e.g. by N. Forbes, with annotations by R. H. Charles, in the latter's *Apocr. and Pseud.*, II, 431-469 and by G. N. Bonwetsch, *Die Bücher der Geheimnisse Henochs*, (*TU* 44, 2), Leipzig, 1922.

[6] Charles, II, 426, Bonwetsch, XVIII; followed by many scholars, see H. H. Rowley, *The relevance of apocalyptic*, 2nd ed., London, 1947, 96, n. 3.

Strong objections to this dating were raised by a number of British scholars, who placed the work in the seventh century because the astronomical considerations it contains could hardly have been made before that.[1] For us the important thing here is that the information about the phoenix is found in this astronomical passage. Independent of this discussion, Schmidt demonstrated as early as 1921 that the short text could not possibly be a resumé of the long one. He concluded that the short text was the older of the two, and thought that it had been written in Aramaic or Hebrew before A.D. 70. The long text he ascribed to an Alexandrian Jew who saw very clearly that all kinds of material of importance to him could be interpolated into the original text; quite independently, the short text must have been translated into Greek, perhaps in the first century of this era.[2] According to Vaillant too, the latter text offers the original form of the

[1] *Cf.* Mrs. Maunders, *The date and place of writing of the Slavonic Enoch*, in *The Observatory*, 1918, 309-316; referred to under the same title by J. K. Fotheringham, in *JThSt*, 20, 1919, 252; these conclusions were rejected by R. H. Charles in an article with the same title in *JThSt*, 22, 1921, 161-163, fully and convincingly answered by Fotheringham, *The Easter calendar and the Slavonic Enoch*, in *JThSt*, 23, 1922, 49-56. In connection with Bonwetsch's translation, this debate was referred to by Kirsopp Lake, *The date of the Slavonic Enoch*, in *Harv. theol. rev.*, 16, 1923, 397-398, who accepted Fotheringham's dating (seventh century) as definite; F. C. Burkitt, *Robert Henry Charles (1855-1931)*, in *Proc. of the Brit. Acad.*, 17, 1931, 441-443, describes Charles as "not very patient of adverse criticism", as evidence of which he mentions Charles's stubborn retention of his early dating despite the convincing arguments put forward by Fotheringham: "In other words "Slavonic Enoch" is not Jewish, but a Christian work of the seventh century A.D." (p. 433). Burkitt, in his *Jewish and Christian apocalypses*, (see p. 276, n. 2), 75-76, had already doubted the typical Jewish character ascribed to *II Enoch*. It may be mentioned once again that these discussions concerned the date of the long recension, which in agreement with Charles' opinion was held to be the original.

[2] N. Schmidt, *The two recensions of Slavonic Enoch*, in *Journ. of the Amer. Orient. Soc.*, 41, 1921, 307-312; he points out that the indications for the Egyptian origin of the work are all found in the long recension, and that the short recension reflects the ideas of the Aramaic-speaking Jews in Palestine. Very important with respect to the Jewish background are the numerous comments in Ginzberg, V, 158-162; also L. Gry, *Quelques noms d'anges et d'êtres mystérieux en II Hénoch*, in *Revue Biblique*, 49, 1940, 195-203 and R. Otto, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn*, Munich, 1934, 142, 148-150, 162-164, 345-347; see also A. Rubenstein, *Observations on the Slavonic Book Enoch*, in *Journ. of Jewish Stud.*, 13, 1962, 15-19.

apocalypse, which in his judgement must have been written in the second century of the present era by a Christian Jew, in close connection with the *Ethiopic Enoch (I Enoch)*. This text is thought by Vaillant to have been translated into Slavonic in the tenth or at the latest in the eleventh century, and much later, probably as late as the fifteenth century, acquired the interpolations resulting in the long recension. Of this latter version, therefore, there was never a Greek text; furthermore, the Slavonian redactor is supposed to have made use of the *Disputatio*, which cannot have been written before 1274.[1] We shall see that this last hypothesis is open to serious objections, but we must in any case accept, as the result of this research, that the short recension is the original one and that it dates from the first or the beginning of the second century of the present era, as well as that the long recension—in particular the astronomical passage with which we are concerned here—could not have been written, in the form in which we know it, before the seventh century.

According to the short text, Henoch sees the sun and the moon in the fourth heaven. The chariot of the sun has four stars on each side and is drawn by flying spirits, each of which has twelve wings; these spirits govern the descent to the earth of dew and heat with the sun's rays, according to the command of the Lord. When the sun sets, four angels remove his crown and take it to the Lord, whereupon the sun turns his chariot and returns without light; in the east his crown is placed on his head once more.[2] The phoenix is not men-

[1] Vaillant, VIII-XIII (*Eth. Enoch*, Judaeo-Christian), XIII-XV (Slavonic trans.), XV-XXII (interpolations). Vaillant's views have been adopted by J. Trinquet, *Hénoch slave (Livre d')*, in *Catholicisme, Hier-Aujourd'hui-Demain*, V, Paris, 1963, 603, and also by A. Rubenstein, *o.c.* 1-21, who assumes that the short recension implies knowledge of the *Letter to the Hebrews*. J. Daniélou, *Theologie du Judéo-christianisme*, Paris-Tournai, 1958, 25-28, also sees in *II Enoch* a Judaeo-Christian work, which in his opinion must have originated at the end of the first century A.D. in Syria. O. Pflöger, *Henochbücher*, 2. *Das slawische H-.buch*, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., III, Tübingen, 1959, 224, makes no mention of the problem of the two recensions and betrays no familiarity with the literature on this point in English. O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1964, 843-844, appears to consider the long recension the oldest (seventh century) and assumed a Jewish "*Grundlage*" that probably originated even before A.D. 70, perhaps in Alexandria. See also Denis, (*cf.* p. 261, n. 1), 28-29.

[2] *II Enoch*, 6 (ed. Vaillant, 13-15 = ch. 12, 14 in Charles and Bonwetsch).

tioned in this passage, but otherwise the entire account is reminiscent of the chapters of the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* we have discussed. There too, the sun's crown is brought to God by four angels, and there an explanation is given of why this was done: it had to be refurbished. Both texts give the same tradition without any clear evidence that either is dependent on the other.[1]

Enoch sees the phoenix not in the fourth but in the sixth heaven, and then even sees seven at the same time. This sixth heaven is inhabited by the angels controlling the processes of nature, including those governing the courses of the stars, the sun, and the moon and giving necessary instructions to the angels leading them. Amid all these angels Enoch sees seven phoenixes, seven cherubs, and seven seraphs singing the praises of the Lord as one voice. They are called the footstool of God, whom they delight in the seventh heaven.[2] Here the phoenix has lost its unique character: in its multiple form it belongs to a group of high-order angels, and there is nothing to recall the Classical conceptions. Here again the oriental tradition of the sonorous cosmic cock emerges: according to the later Mohammedan accounts, this bird too was found below the throne of God.[3] There was no difficulty in taking the sun bird as an angel. We have already pointed out that Proclus calls the cosmic cocks "sun angels", that in one version of the *Disputatio* the sun birds are "heavenly angels", and that in one manuscript of the *Byzantine Physiologus* the two griffins are interpreted as the archangels Michael and Gabriel.[4]

Thus, in the original, short recension of *II Enoch* the phoenix is not mentioned in connection with the visit to the fourth heaven, but

[1] For the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, see above, p. 262. Vaillant, remarkably enough, overlooked this connection: he assumed (p. 15, n. 4) that the four angels might be a reminiscence of the four spirits of *I Enoch*, 82, 11.

[2] *II Enoch*, 8 (ed. Vaillant, 21 = ch. 19 in Charles and Bonwetsch). It is quite incomprehensible how Vaillant could have taken as certain (pp. VIII, XVII) that the *Disputatio* based its mention of the phoenix on this passage, as though there were no other relevant texts. He deduces from this that "*le texte grec de l'Hénoch chrétien existait encore au XIIIe siècle*"; he also thinks that the removal of the sun's crown by the angels was taken for the *Disputatio* from the short recension.

[3] See p. 267.

[4] See p. 277.

it does occur in the long, interpolated text. The four stars on each side of the sun's chariot each have a thousand stars under them, so that a total of eight thousand stars accompany the sun.[1] Furthermore, they are preceded during the day by 150,000 angels and at night by a thousand—probably originally ten thousand [2]—and a hundred angels give the sun its fire. Of the "flying spirits" which, according to the short text, draw the sun's chariot, it is said in the long text that they have the shape of birds, one resembling the phoenix and the second the *chalkedri* (singular). These latter "birds" have the body of a lion but the feet, head, and tail of a crocodile and their colour is the purple of the rainbow. Their size is nine hundred measures and they have the wings of angels, twelve each. These creatures draw the sun's chariot and convey dew and heat to the earth; at the Lord's command they reverse the course of the chariot which descends and rises in the sky and on the earth with the light of its rays.[3] When the sun sets, four hundred angels remove his crown and bring it to the Lord; they turn the sun with his chariot, and he returns, without light, during the seven great hours of the night. At the eighth hour the four hundred angels bring the crown back and place it on the sun again. Then "the elements", which are called phoenix and *chalkedri*, begin to sing, at which all the birds begin to flutter their wings, praising him who brings the light, and singing: "The giver of light arrives and gives the light to his creation".[4]

The points of agreement between this text and those discussed above are immediately evident. The four hundred angels that re-

[1] According to Vaillant, (XVIII and 91, n. 2) this is to be traced to a misunderstanding on the part of the Slavonian revisor, who must have read a word in the Slavonic translation of the short version that closely resembled "thousand". But Cumont, *Text et mon.*, I, 44, n. 5 points to related Iranian conceptions.

[2] Vaillant, 91, n. 3 makes it likely that here 1 (*sc.* myriad) must be read instead of 1,000.

[3] The interpolator has distorted the original idea that the dew and warmth descend with the rays of the sun (thus in *I Enoch*, 75, 4-5), so that now the birds of the sun do this with the ascent and descent of the chariot of the sun; the interpolation is extremely unsuccessful, because the mention of the rays of the sun has become pointless.

[4] *II Enoch*, 6 (long recension, ed. Vaillant, 91-93 = chs. 12, 14-15 in Charles and Bonwetsch).

move the sun's crown at evening and return it in the morning have become a hundred times as many as those who perform the same function according to the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* and the short recension of the *Slavonic Enoch*, but four hundred angels are also mentioned in the Slavonic translation of the former.[1] The same tendency to a multiplication by a factor of a hundred can be seen in the indications on the bird's size: the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* speaks of a size like that of nine mountains and the *Disputatio* of nine ells, but *II Enoch* mentions nine hundred measures.[2] The reaction of the earthly birds to the song of the phoenix and the *chalkedri* corresponds to that of the cocks in the texts on the phoenix-griffin. James pointed out that here "birds" must have the restricted sense of "cocks", as is so often the case in Greek.[3]

Because of all the texts concerning the phoenix-griffin mentioned above Vaillant knew only the *Disputatio*, he took it for granted that the Slavonian redactor of the long text must have taken his information from that work. On closer examination, however, the points of direct agreement prove to be limited to the roughly equal number of angels escorting the sun [4] and the mention of the *chaledris-chalkedri*, both of which names may be assumed to indicate the same bird. The differences, on the contrary, are so great that the assumed borrowing must be considered extremely improbable. That in the *Slavonic Enoch* the birds draw the chariot, whereas in the *Disputatio* they protect the earth against the sun's heat, could indeed be explained by the fact that in the long text the passage concerning the two birds was interpolated after the "flying spirits", which according to the short text draw the chariot. But the decisive

[1] For the Greek and Slavonic *Apocalypse of Baruch*, see p. 262.

[2] According to the first Slavonic translation of the *Disputatio*, the size is 60 ells (*cf.* Vaillant, 91 (90), n. 7); the astrologer of Leningrad puts the griffin at 200 ells (see p. 273, n. 1); for the *Physiologus of Vienna* (as large as the island of Phoinikôn), see p. 54, n. 3.

[3] James, LXV, adopted by Burkitt (see p. 276, n. 2), 76, n. 1, and repeated in *R. H. Charles* (p. 288, n. 1), 442. For ὄρνις = ἀλεκτρύων see Thompson, *Glossary of Greek birds*, 33, and Liddell-Scott, 1254, s.v. ὄρνις, III.

[4] Various readings are given for the texts of the *Disputatio* (see p. 274, n. 2) and the correct reading of *II Enoch* is also uncertain; see p. 291, n. 2.

fact is that *II Enoch* could not possibly have borrowed the description of the external appearance of the sun birds from the *Disputatio*, since the Byzantine text refers only to the size of nine ells. Furthermore, it is difficult to see why the supposed Slavonian redactor would have changed the concrete "ells" to the vague "measures".

In both texts the phoenix and the *chaledris-chalkedri* are taken as similar creatures: in the *Disputatio* they are griffins, in *II Enoch* their appearance is the same. But just as in the former text two separate traditions concerning the phoenix and the griffin (both ultimately traceable to the same oriental cosmic sun bird) are related,[1] in the latter text the details concerning the bird's appearance seem originally to have been divided between different creatures. The "birds" have a winged lion's body, each with twelve wings, but for the rest the legs, head, and tail of a crocodile, and they have the purple colour of the rainbow. The twelve wings were taken by the interpelator from the short text, in which the same is said about the "flying spirits".[2] Of the external features only the purple colour recalls the traditional descriptions of the phoenix, and even then it must be kept in mind that the comparison with the rainbow occurs only in Lactantius and in the description of the *simurgh-ʿanḳa'*, which may also represent an indication of an oriental influence.[3] The combination of a winged lion and a crocodile is inconceivable for a phoenix, however, and can only have originally been related to the *chalkedri*. The results of an investigation into the meaning of this name and the nature of this monstrous creature clearly reveal the ultimate source of the material in *II Enoch*.

The *Disputatio* gives the name *chaledris* to the companion of the phoenix; in the first Slavonic translation of this text it is called the *chalkedri* and in the second the *chalendri*.[4] The correct spelling of this term was evidently not certain: in another manuscript of the *Disputatio* we find the plural form *chalkedones*, which must have originated as an error of the pen.[5] In the existing translations of the

[1] See p. 275-276.
[2] See p. 289.
[3] See p. 254.
[4] See Vaillant, 91, n. 4.
[5] See p. 274, n. 5. In the unimportant third recension of *II Enoch*, the

Slavonic Enoch the name is spelled *chalkydri*, *chalkedrius*, and *chalkedri*.[1] Various derivations have been proposed to explain this name, for instance from the Indian bird *garuda* and the Persian cock *kahrkatâs*.[2] But it is improbable that either of these birds gave rise to *chaledris-chalkedri*, in spite of the relationships we have traced[3] and even though the most unexpected changes can indeed occur in adoptions of names. For the first part of the name Vaillant pointed to the parallelism between φοῖνιξ and χάλκη (κάλχη) or purple, and for the second part to the parallelism between ὡς φοῖνιξ ... ὡσεί κέδρος in *Ps.* xci.13 (LXX), names of trees susceptible to imaginative elaborations.[4] But no evidence at all can be offered to support the hypothesis that on the basis of this text—in which the palm is indeed taken, according to an old tradition, as phoenix [5]—the cedar mentioned there was transformed into a bird. The simplest and therefore the most likely explanation is still Charles's opinion that the name *chalkydri*, which he considers to be a plural form, is a transcription of χαλκύδραι, bronze hydras.[6]

Now, a *hydra*, as the term suggests, is a water-snake. In addition to the *hydra*, other water snakes—the *hydros* and the *enhydris*—were known in the Classical world, as well as amphibious snakes, the *chersydros* and the *chelydros*. The differences between these snakes are so small that they were even confused in Classical times. According to Aristotle, the *hydros* and the *enhydris* too were amphibious, although only the latter, like the crocodile, had legs.[7] Nicander distinguished between the *hydros*, the *chersydros*, and the *chelydros*, but in an inserted, spurious verse the *hydros* and the *chelydros* are taken as the same.[8] Philumenus takes the *hydros* and

word *chalkedri* is written in the plural, see Vaillant, XXIII. Χαλκηδών occurs only in *Rev.*, xxi.19, where it is a precious stone.

[1] *Chalkydri*: Forbes, 436; *chalkedrius*: Bonwetsch, 11; *chalkedri*: Vaillant, 91.

[2] *Garuda*: James, LXVI, followed by Ryssel, (p. 261, n. 1), 452, n.*e.* *Kahrkatâs:* Bousset-Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums*, 498.

[3] See p. 266-267.

[4] Vaillant, 91, n. 5.

[5] See p. 57.

[6] Charles, *Apocr. and Pseud.*, II, 436.

[7] Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.*, I, 1, 487a, 21-23.

[8] Nicander, *Theriaca*, 359-371 *(chersydros)*, 411-437 *(chelydros)*, 421 *(hydros)*, 414 *(hydros = chelydros)*.

the *chersydros* as the same animal,[1] and Isidore of Seville says that the *chersydros* and the *chelydros* are identical.[2]

The name *chelydros* immediately suggests the *chaledris* of the Byzantine *Disputatio*. If these two names originally indicated the same animal, the *chaledris* must originally have been a serpent-like animal living on land as well as in the water. It is quite possible that the name of the companion of the phoenix reminded a copyist of the water-snake usually called *chelydros*. Nevertheless, it seems improbable that this was the original spelling of the name, because in *II Enoch* and in one of the Greek manuscripts of the *Disputatio*, as in the first Slavonic translation of the latter, the first syllable of the name is always *chalk-*, and the insertion of the letter k in *chaledris* would be difficult to explain. Moreover, the Byzantine text has been handed down in a rather corrupt form: the name of the phoenix is also spelled incorrectly *(phirix)*. Consequently, Charles's suggestion that the name *chalkedri* indicates a "water-snake", *hydra* or *hydros*, qualified as "bronze", remains probable.

The animal actually meant by *chalkedri* is not difficult to determine. It has the winged body of a lion and the legs, head, and tail of a crocodile. The latter in itself suggests that the bronze water-snake could have meant the crocodile. The combination with the lion, which we shall discuss shortly, is not contradictory, because the crocodile is described in this way in the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*, according to which it resembles a lion from its head to its navel and below that a serpent.[3] Here again we find the comparison with the snake, and, furthermore, the oldest version of this work, in discussing the viper, says that it resembles a man as far down as its navel but has the tail of a crocodile.[4] From these texts it becomes clear

1 Philumenus, *De venenatis animalibus*, 24, 1.

2 Isidore, *Etymol.*, XIX, 4, 24: *chelydros serpens, qui et chersydros dicitur, quia et in aquis et in terris moratur.*

3 *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*, 8: ὁ Φυσιολόγος ἔλεξε περὶ τοῦ κροκοδείλου ὅτι ἔστι μὲν ζῷον ἔνυδρον, ἐν τοῖς ποταμοῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς λιμναῖς εὑρισκόμενον, ἔμπροσθεν μὲν μέχρι ὀμφαλοῦ φαίνεται ὡς λέων, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ παρακάτω ὡς ὄφις.

4 *Physiologus*, 10: ἕως ὀμφαλοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔχουσι μορφήν, οὐρὰν δὲ ἔχουσι κροκοδείλου (similarly in *Byz. Physiol*, 22). This representation of the viper is determined by the conception of the monster Echidna, the upper part of whose body was that of a woman and the lower part that of a snake; *cf.* L.

that the crocodile and the snake were considered to be so closely related that in describing one reference could be made to the other. This interpretation of *chalkedri* is confirmed by the *Untitled Gnostic treatise* in which the crocodiles are also indicated as water-snakes (ὕδραι).[1] In this Coptic text, furthermore, the crocodile is mentioned together with the phoenix—and the bull—as a sacred animal of Egypt. That the crocodile covered by the name *chalkedri* is called "bronze" is easy to understand in view of the hard, bronze-coloured plates on its back. Reference may be made here to the magnificent description of the crocodile in *Job* xl.25-xli.26 (Masora, LXX). In xli.7 it is said that its back consists of protective shields; the Septuagint puts this as "bronze shields".[2] We may therefore conclude that by the "bronze water-snake" which Charles was so discerning as to distinguish in the *chalkedri*, the crocodile was meant.

The compilation of phoenix traditions in the *Physiologus of Vienna* also preserves an unmistakable indication that the crocodile was the companion of the phoenix. In the description of the bird it is said that it can move its upper jaw but not the lower one.[3] Herodotus and Aristotle both state, however, that the only animal for which this holds is the crocodile.[4]

The *chalkedri*, on the other hand, is described as a combination of a crocodile and a lion. We have seen a striking parallel to this in the description of the crocodile in the *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basil*. Since the phoenix and the *chalkedri* are both mentioned in a part of the *Slavonic Enoch*, which in its present form may not be dated

Von Sybel, *Echidna*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, I, 1884-1890, 1212-1213, and Escher, *Echidna*, in *RE*, 5, 1905, 1917-1919.

[1] *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, 170, 18 (ed. Böhlig-Labib, 95).

[2] The translation of *Job* xli.7 had already offered difficulties in Classical times. See F. Field, *Origenis Hexapla*, II, Hildesheim, 1964 (= Oxford, 1875), 78. LXX: τὰ ἔγκατα αὐτοῦ ἀσπίδες χάλκειαι, the meaning of which is that his internal organs were enclosed by bronze shields: Aquila and the Vulgate have σῶμα and *corpus*, respectively, in place of ἔγκατα.

[3] *Physiologus of Vienna*, 6-7: καὶ τὴν ἐπάνω γένυν σαλεύειν, οὐχὶ τὰς κάτω μαξίλας, ἀλλ' ἐπάνω ἔχει⟨ν⟩ τὴν γένυν.

[4] Herodotus, II, 68: οὐδὲ κινέει τὴν κάτω γνάθον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο μοῦνον θηρίων τὴν ἄνω γνάθον προσάγει τῇ κάτω. Aristotle, *Hist. animal.*, I, 11 (492b, 23): κινεῖ δὲ πάντα τὰ ζῷα τὴν κάτωθεν γένυν, πλὴν τοῦ ποταμίου κροκοδείλου. Similarly, Achilles Tatius, IV, 19, 5: ἀνοίγει δὲ τὴν γένυν τὴν ἄνω, τὴν δὲ κάτω στερεὰν ἔχει.

earlier than the seventh century in any event, and since the *Disputatio* with its mention of the *chaledris* dates from the end of the thirteenth century, it might be thought that the combination of the crocodile and the lion too originated in the Byzantine period.[1] This is, however, unlikely, because the crocodile and the lion were already sun animals in ancient Egypt, and their merging fits most logically into the Egyptian syncretism of Roman times.

Long before the Hellenistic period the crocodile god Sobk was combined with the sun god to become Re-Sobk (Souchos).[2] This god was represented with a human body and the head of a crocodile provided with rams horns, feathers, and the solar disk.[3] In the Ptolemaic temple of Kôm-Ombo dedicated to this god, there is a figure representing a crocodile on which the solar disk rests, and before it an offering of bread, meat, and flowers.[4] Clement of Alexandria says too that: "Some Egyptians show the sun on a ship, others on a crocodile".[5] Lastly, the sun itself could assume the shape of a crocodile: [6] In a magical papyrus kept in Berlin it is said, in an invo-

[1] F. C. Burkitt, *R. H. Charles*, (see p. 288, n. 1), 442.

[2] Bonnet, 393, 755-757.

[3] Bonnet, 755, fig. 180.

[4] F. Zimmermann, *Die ägyptische Religion...*, (Stud. z. Gesch. und. Kult. d. Altertums, V, 5-6), Paderborn, 1912, 106.

[5] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.*, V, 41, 2-3: Αἰγυπτίων οἳ μὲν ἐπὶ πλοίου, οἳ δὲ ἐπὶ κροκοδείλου τὸν ἥλιον δεικνύουσι (see also p. 299, n. 7); this text is referred to by Zimmermann, 106. In a slightly different form we find the same conception in Porphyry, *De cultu simulacrorum, frg.* 10, in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, III, 11, 48, who says that the sun god's boat rests on a crocodile. Comparison of the two texts shows that Clement must have drawn on the same source (probably Chaeremon) as Porphyry, whose report reads: Ἥλιον δὲ σημαίνουσιν ποτὲ μὲν δι' ἀνθρώπου ἐπιβεβηκότος πλοῖον, τοῦ πλοίου ἐπὶ κροκοδείλου κειμένου. δηλοῖ δὲ τὸ μὲν πλοῖον τὴν ἐν ὑγρῷ κίνησιν, ὁ δὲ κροκόδειλος πότιμον ὕδωρ, ἐν ᾧ φέρεται ὁ ἥλιος. Ἐσημαίνετο τοίνυν ὁ ἥλιος δι' ἀέρος ὑγροῦ καὶ γλυκέος τὴν περιπόλησιν ποιεῖσθαι. Especially this last sentence (*cf.* p. 299, n. 7) points to a common source, but it is not possible to determine which of the two authors renders the original text most accurately. The sun-character of the crocodile is also clearly expressed in the report of Achilles Tatius, IV, 19, 6, that this animal has as many teeth as there are days in the year: φασὶ δὲ ὅτι τὸν ἀριθμὸν τυγχάνουσιν, ὅσας ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὅλον ἔτος ἀναλάμπει τὰς ἡμέρας.

[6] See Bonnet, 757, who mentions that this conception especially concerns the sun in the first hours of his revolution. The text in n. 1 on p. 298 shows that this is not always true.

cation of Apollo, that in the west he has the shape of a crocodile with the tail of a serpent.[1] From ancient times the lion too was associated with the sun: in Heliopolis a pair of lions were worshipped as animals of the sun.[2] The dead man who identified himself with the sun god could say, "I am he who crosses the heaven, I am the Lion Re".[3] According to the Greek magical papyri, a lion's body was assigned to the sun in the fifth or sixth hour of its daily course in particular.[4] We have already seen how often the lion occurs as symbol of the sun on the later magical amulets.[5] This identification was extraordinarily persistent: in an alchemistic manuscript dating from the fifteenth century the sun is still shown riding on a lion.[6] The lion and the crocodile are together related to the circling sun in the remarkable work by Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Murcurii*, in the second book of which Philologia makes a celestial journey to the "immense plains of light and the springtime of the ethereal peace". For the last part of her journey she travels in the boat of the sun, which is manned by seven sailors; on the prow of this ship a cat is painted, on the mast a lion, and on the stern a crocodile.[7] This story must ultimately go back to an Egyptian source, since the Classical world knew only a chariot for the sun, the boat of the sun being typically Egyptian.

The combination of the crocodile and the lion into a single creature must have arisen in Egyptian syncretism, which went through a very flourishing period at the beginning of our era. We have already seen how popular the formation of all kinds of monstrosities was at that time: we need only think of the garment of Saqqara, on which there is not only a *benu*-phoenix but also a combination of a crocodile and the scarab, with above that the representation of the

[1] *Papyri graecae magicae*, II, 111-112 (ed. Preisendanz, I, 26): ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρὸς λίβα μέρεσι μορφὴν ἔχεις κροκοδείλου, οὐρὰν ὄφεως.

[2] Aelian, XII, 7.

[3] *Book of the Dead*, 62; Bonnet, 427.

[4] Bonnet, 427.

[5] See p. 240.

[6] *Cf.* J. Schwabe, *Archetyp und Tierkreis*, Basel, 1951, 413, fig. 130.

[7] Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, II, 183: *In prora felis forma depicta, leonis in arbore, crocodilli in extimo videbatur.* According to *Pistis Sophia*, 136 (trans. Schmidt-Till, *GCS* 45, 233) the moon's ship also carried a cat's face on the prow.

winged crocodile having the falcon's head of Horus, which appears to have been particularly popular in the first century of this era.[1] In later times the crocodile was often connected with the sphinx, which was also taken as a sun animal.[2] The sphinx was shown not only with its usual human head but also with an additional crocodile head projecting from the wide breast of the lion's body. This latter motif was particularly favoured in the first decade of the second century A.D., as can be seen from the representations on coins of Trajan and Hadrian as well as on limestone bas-reliefs and pottery, for instance lamps.[3] The griffin was also combined with this motif. On one of Hadrian's coins dating from A.D. 135/136, the sphinx-crocodile is shown walking to the right with a female griffin riding on its back.[4] In Fouquet's collection there is an even more remarkable variant in the form of a lamp having the shape of a sphinx with a nimbus, the head of a crocodile emerging from its breast and from its hind end the head of a predatory bird interpreted by Perdrizet as the falcon-head of Horus or the eagle's head of the griffin.[5]

To explain the crocodile-lion combination we must start with the already established fact that the borderline between the crocodile and the snake was exceedingly vague.[6] This is additionally confirmed by the explanation given by Clement of Alexandria together with the statement cited above concerning the way in which the Egyptians represented the sun, i.e. on a boat or on a crocodile. These representations indicate "that the sun, by making his journey through the sweet and moist air, generates time, which the crocodile also suggests by reason of another sacred story.[7] This last must

[1] See p. 241.

[2] For the sphinx as sun animal, see W. B. Kristensen, *De Egyptische sfinx*, in his *Verzamelde bijdragen tot kennis der antieke godsdiensten*, Amsterdam, 1947, 44-47, also Bonnet, 746-747

[3] A. Mallon, *Bas-reliefs de Sphinx*, in *Rev. archéol.*, 4e Série, 5, 1905, I, 169-179; P. Perdrizet, *Les terres cuites grecques d'Égypte de la collection Fouquet*, Nancy-Paris-Strassburg, 1921, I, 79-80, II, pls. LIV-LVI; R. Herbig, *Sphinx*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 3, 2 1929, 1732-1733.

[4] Mallon, 177, 178, fig. 9.

[5] Perdrizet, I, 79, n. 191; II, pl. LIV.

[6] See p. 295. *cf.* also *Job* xl.25 (LXX), where the crocodile is called δράκων.

[7] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.*, V, 41, 3: σημαίνουσι δὲ ὅτι ὁ ἥλιος, δι' ἀέρος γλυκεροῦ καὶ ὑγροῦ τὴν πορείαν ποιούμενος, γεννᾷ τὸν χρόνον, ὃν αἰνίσσεται ὁ κροκόδειλος διά τινα ἄλλην ἱερατικὴν ἱστορίαν.

refer to the representation of the snake biting its own tail, which was a symbol of Aion-Cronus and, as such, closely related to the sun.[1] In the gnostic *Pistis Sophia* the sun is described as a huge dragon or serpent holding its tail in its mouth,[2] and as shown by Clement, this creature could also be interpreted as a crocodile.

In the symbolic representations of Aion-Cronus the snake and the lion are consistently associated with each other. The best-known representation of this syncretistic deity is that of an erect man with a lion's head and a snake wound around his body.[3] To the same series belongs the *Chnoubis*,[4] which indeed was also represented as a serpent with a lion's head.[5] In the gnostic *Apokryphon of John*, Jaldabaoth, the first archon and world-creator, has the body of a serpent (dragon) and the face of a lion.[6] This gnostic image was identified with the planet Saturn-Cronus = Chronos, all-generating Time.[7]

This is the conception underlying the report in the *Pysiologus of Pseudo-Basil* that the crocodile resembles a lion from the front and a snake from the back, and this is the sense in which the "bronze water-snake", which according to the *Slavonic Enoch* escorts the sun together with the phoenix, must be understood. The fact that in the latter case not the head but the body is leonine, the rest resem-

[1] *Cf.* Nilsson, *Gesch. d. griech. Religion*, II, 479, n. 1, 481; H. Leisegang, *Das Mysterium der Schlange*, in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 1939, 152-250; on Helios as serpent, especially 190-194.

[2] *Pistis Sophia*, 136 (trans. Schmidt-Till, *GCS* 45, 233).

[3] Cumont, *Text. et mon.*, I, 74-85, R. Pettazoni, *The monstrous figure of time in Mythraism*, in his *Essays on the History of Religion*, (Suppl. to *Numen*, I), Leiden, 1954, 180-192.

[4] Nilsson, *Gesch. d. Griech. Religion*, II, pl. 6, 3.

[5] See p. 241.

[6] *Apocr. of John*, III, 15, 11 (ed. Krause-Labib, Wiesbaden, 1962, 69) and *idem*, II, 10, 8-9 (ed. Krause-Labib, 136). Proclus, *De arte sacra* (ed. Bidez (see p. 276, n. 4), 150), says that τις τῶν ἡλιακῶν δαιμόνων λεοντοπρόσωπον φαινόμενος becomes invisible when the cock has learnt of the arrival of the sun. The combination lion's head/snake's tail in hybrids has a long history: very early, Chimaera (Homer, *Ilias*, VI, 181) was already visualized thus, *cf.* e.g. R. Engelmann, *Chimaira*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, I, 1884-1886, 893-895; E. Bethe, *Chimaira*, in *RE*, 3, 1899, 2281-2282.

[7] See G. Quispel, *Gnosticism and the New Testament*, in *VC*, 19, 1965, 75; *cf.* also H. Leisegang, *Die Gnosis*, 4th ed., Stuttgart, 1955, 173. The identification Kronos-Chronos is found as early as in Pherecydes of Syrus (sixth century B.C.), see W. Jaeger, *Die Theologie der frühen griechischen Denker*, Darmstadt, 1964 (reprint = Stuttgart, 1953), 83-84.

bling a crocodile, is not a valid objection, since its import is only that in this creature the snake-like character is dominant, as in the other cases of the snake-lion combination. We may therefore conclude that the *chalkedri* was originally a symbol of self-renewing time having its origin in the Egyptian syncretism of the first or second century of the present era. In this milieu it thus formed a perfect parallel with the phoenix,[1] and it was obviously under the influence of the oriental tradition of the bird of the sun that both animals came to be seen as the constant attendants of the sun.

The kind of thinking in which the phoenix and the *chalkedri* were symbols of the sun and of Aion is well illustrated by the already-mentioned magical papyrus in Berlin. It is said there that in the eastern part of the Red Sea the sun carries the "sacred bird", i.e. the phoenix, on his garment; furthermore, in the north it has the shape of a child sitting on a lotos flower (Harpocrates), in the south the shape of the sacred hawk, in the west that of a crocodile with a serpent's tail, and in the east that of a winged dragon.[2] An exact representation of this formulation is seen on a gem in the British Museum. In the middle, within an oval, the phoenix is shown (without nimbus or rays but probably with the solar disk on its head). The area outside the oval is divided into four compartments; in the upper lefthand one Harpocrates is represented on the lotus flower[3] and in the righthand one a winged serpent; the lower lefthand corner is damaged but a crocodile can be distinguished, and in the righthand compartment there is a hawk.[4]

[1] See e.g. p. 70 and 75.

[2] *Papyri graecae magicae*, II, 105-114 (ed. Preisendanz, I, 26-28): σὺ τὸ ἱερὸν ὄρνεον ἔχεις ἐν τῇ στολῇ ἐν τοῖς πρὸς ἀπηλιώτην μέρεσιν τῆς ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης, ὥσπερ ἔχεις ἐν τοῖς πρὸς βορρᾶ μέρεσι μορφὴν νηπίου παιδὸς ἐπὶ λωτῷ καθημένου, ἀντολεῦ, πολυώνυμε ... ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρὸς νότον μέρεσι μορφὴν ἔχεις τοῦ ἁγίου ἱέρακος, ..., ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρὸς λίβα μέρεσι μορφὴν ἔχεις κορκοδείλου, οὐρὰν ὄφεως ..., ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρὸς ἀπηλιώτην μέρεσι δράκοντα ἔχεις πτεροφυῆ. *Cf.* Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, II, (Stud. z. Palaeogr. u. Papyruskunde, 23), Leipzig, 1924, 96.

[3] For the relation of the phoenix and Harpocrates, see also the gem in pl. IX, 1.

[4] See pl. IX, 2. The relationship between this gem and the Berlin magical papyrus was first remarked by A. A. Barb, *Abraxas-Studien*, in *Hommages à Waldemar Deonna*, (Coll. Latomus, XXVIII), Brussels, 1957, 81-86, shown there in pl. XVIII, 1, 2, 3. However, Barb confused the photo-

This magical papyrus and gem clearly demonstrate how closely the phoenix, the crocodile, and the winged serpent or dragon were related to each other as symbols of the sun. The description of the *chalkedri*, the companion of the phoenix in *II Enoch*, also evokes the image of a winged dragon. And in the magical papyrus the phoenix and the winged dragon are connected with the sun rising in the east.

The foregoing interpretation of the phoenix and the *chalkedri* in *II Enoch* is given a remarkable confirmation by a seventeenth century painting on a ceiling once part of an old mayoral residence in the city of Arnhem and now kept in the Arnhem Municipal Museum.[1] On this ceiling the young sun god stands in his chariot drawn by four horses, under which a fire and clouds are shown.[2] In the fire a salamander can be seen, and above the horses the phoenix and a flying dragon. To leave no doubt about the identity of the phoenix, the painter has shown it being consumed by fire on the outstretched left hand of the sun god. The companion of the phoenix is a winged, serpent-like beast with two legs and a fire-breathing crocodile head. The source from which the painter of this ceiling borrowed his imagery cannot be determined with certainty. Since the moon is also shown—as a woman in a chariot drawn by two oxen—it seems not improbable that it was an emblem book.[3] The ultimate literary source cannot be established. The only texts we know so far in which the phoenix and the *chalkedri (chaledris)* are mentioned as attendants of the sun are the *Slavonic Enoch* and the Byzantine *Disputatio*. But in the former these animals draw the sun's chariot, and the latter makes no mention of the crocodilic aspect of the *chaledris*. In any case, however, the painting is entirely explained by the present analysis of the original description in *II Enoch*. It is conceivable that a thorough study of the other motifs of the Arnhem ceiling will provide further clarification.

graphs of the original with the plaster positive, which had its effect on his description (p. 83).

[1] See pl. XL.

[2] The same occurs in the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 6, see 2; p. 261.

[3] A. Henkel and A. Schone, *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, 1967, 794-797 give many phoenixes but none resembling the one in Arnhem.

The mutual relationship and the development of the conceptions discussed above can be stated as follows. The starting-point is formed by the oriental tradition concerning an immense cosmic sun bird, the heavenly cock, of which our earthly cocks are counterparts. This bird is identified with the phoenix by the writer of the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch,* who also presents it as a sign of God's forbearance toward the sins of mankind. If our interpretation of the Laevius fragment is correct, this identification cannot have been invented by the Jewish author. On the other hand, the bird of the sun was also visualized as a griffin, as shown by the Leningrad astrologer and the *Byzantine Physiologus.* The latter mentions two griffins, and it is probable that this too goes back to an oriental influence, since Proclus refers to more than one cosmic cock. Both the phoenix and the griffin(s) use their wings to protect the world against the destructive heat of the sun.

In Egyptian syncretism the phoenix was developed into a symbol of continually self-renewing time. This lay close to the idea that it escorted the sun each day, whether or not it influenced the symbolic interpretation directly. Similar ideas about the serpent, crocodile, and lion gave rise to the composite creature called *chalkedri* in *II Enoch.* Both were placed in connection with the circling sun, and this led to an image showing close agreement with the first-mentioned, but nevertheless diverging to a high degree: the birds of the sun do not have the function of diminishing the destructive power of the sun but are rather symbols of the sun itself and of the time brought forth by the sun's daily revolution.

The only original element in the *Disputatio* consists of the combining of all these divergent ideas. The author of this work managed to interrelate the parallel traditions concerning the protective function of the phoenix and the griffins by starting from the idea that two griffins accompany the sun. In *II Enoch* he found two sun animals which accompanied the sun and were called phoenix and *chalkedri.* By borrowing this he reduced the phoenix and its crocodilian companion, which he called *chaledris,* to forms of the griffin. We are forced to conclude that the *Disputatio* is dependent on *II Enoch,* because the other points of agreement can also be explained quite

satisfactorily in this way.[1] This implies that all the conclusions drawn by Vaillant from the reverse assumption are incorrect; so we must conclude, for instance, that there must also have been a Greek version of the long recension of *II Enoch*.

The author of the *Disputatio* could have felt himself supported, in stating that the phoenix and the *chalkedri* are actually griffins, by the description of these animals in *II Enoch* itself, because there they fulfil a function that was similarly ascribed to the griffins in the Classical world: the drawing of the chariot of the sun. Philostratus reports that among the Indians the griffin is consecrated to Helios and that in their art the chariot of the sun god is drawn by four griffins.[2] This report must concern ideas current in Syria and borrowed from there by the Classical world.[3] It is improbable, however, that the drawing of the sun's chariot belongs to the original conception of the phoenix and the *chalkedri* as sun animals. We have already pointed out that this could have been taken from the short text of *II Enoch*, because the passage on the birds of the sun was interpolated after the mention of the "flying spirits" which draw the chariot of the sun. Furthermore, the above-indicated original symbolic meanings of the phoenix and of the "bronze water-snake" or crocodile combined with the lion, give no reason to assume that they were considered to fulfil a similar function. The redactor of *II Enoch*, however, found no reason not to assume this. Perhaps he was led by the question the Lord asks Job in the description of the enormous strength of the crocodile: "Couldst thou play with it as with a bird or bind it like a little sparrow for thy child?" [4] The answer to this rethorical question must of course be in the negative. According to *II Enoch*, however, God himself is able to do this: He plays with this enormous monster and harnesses it like a bird to the chariot of the sun.

[1] In the opinion of Vaillant, XVIII, 89, 91, the redactor of the long recension of *II Enoch* borrowed the description of Paradise from the *Disputatio* too. The conceptions occurring there all occur in Jewish literature, however; see Ginzberg, V, 159.

[2] Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III, 48.

[3] See Ziegler, *Gryps*, in *RE*, 7, 2, 1912, 1921-1925, and Cumont, *Études syriennes*, 94-95.

[4] *Job* xl.29 (LXX): παίξῃ δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ ὥσπερ ὀρνέῳ ἢ δήσεις αὐτὸν ὥσπερ στρουθίον παιδίῳ;

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ABODE

The phoenix appears in the world of man only to renew itself. Once it has risen from the ashes it immediately departs for the blessed abode that is its true dwelling place. In Classical times it was generally believed that this place was to be sought in the East, but opinion differed as to just where. Herodotus had heard that the phoenix came from Arabia, and many later authors accepted this view.[1] Since Arabia was the land of spices and perfumes that played an important part at the death of the phoenix, it is not impossible that this gave rise to the association of the phoenix with Arabia.[2]

But according to another tradition, the phoenix made its home in India. This was first reported in the second century after Christ by Lucianus and Aristides.[3] India was then the wonderland *par excellence*, and it is hardly surprising that the wonder bird was thought to live there.[4] The same holds, indeed, for Ethiopia, which was also mentioned as the native country of the phoenix; according to Achilles Tatius, the phoenix lives with the Ethiopians and dies among the

[1] Herodotus, II, 73; Pliny, X, 3; *1 Clement*, 25; Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28; Tertullian, *De resurr. mort.*, 13; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 98; Diogenes Laert., IX, 79; Aurelius Victor, IV, 14; Solinus, 33, 11; *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15; Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59, *Exameron*, V, 23, 79; Epiphanius, *Ancor.*, 84; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome*, IV, 9; Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22: *Schol.* on Lucian, *Hermot.*, 53.

[2] The significance of the phoenix myth is seriously underestimated when the version given by Herodotus and others (see p. 190 here) is interpreted solely as an illustration of the importation of southern Arabian spices into Egypt, as is done by D. H. Müller, *Arabia*, 1, in *RE*, 2, 1896, 346.

[3] Lucian, *De morte peregrini*, 27, *Navigium*, 44; Aristides, XLV, 107; Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III, 49; Sidonius, *Carmina*, II, 407, VII, 354, IX, 326, XXII, 50-51; Ausonius, XXVI, 16, *Epist.*, XX, 9; *Gr. Physiologus*, 7; Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32; Lydus, *De mens.*, IV, 11; *Romance of Alexander (Historia de preliis)*, X; Schol. on Persius, I, 46; Schol. on Aristides, XLV, 107. Petrus Damiani, *Opusc. varia*, LII, 11 (*PL* 145, 773B), offers both possibilities: *in Indiae vel in Arabiae partibus*; see also Heliodorus on p. 307, n. 2.

[4] See Nilsson's review of Hubaux and Leroy, in *Gnomon*, 17, 1941, 214 and also p. 306, n. 6 below.

Egyptians.[1] The reverse situation is found in Tzetzes, but this must have been based on a misunderstanding,[2] since he refers to the *Vita Apollonii* of Philostratus, and the idea that the phoenix lives in Egypt and dies in Ethiopia is nowhere to be found in this work. Philostratus says that the phoenix lives in India and builds its nest near the sources of the Nile, and also that it travels to Egypt before its death.[3] In all probability Tzetzes read his source carelessly and interpreted "sources of the Nile" as Ethiopia, although Philostratus placed the source of the Nile in the swamps of the Euphrates.[4] A confused view is also found in Ambrose, who has the bird live in Arabia but then says that it brings its dead father from Ethiopia to Lycaonia.[5]

India and Ethiopia were not only lands of unprecedented wonders [6]—a direct geographical connection was assumed to exist between them, because the Persian Gulf was considered to be an in-

[1] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 3: μερίζονται δὲ αὐτοῦ Αἰθίοπες μὲν τὴν ζωήν, Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ τὴν τελευτήν ... 7. ζῶν μὲν οὖν Αἰθίοψ ἐστὶ τῇ τροφῇ, ἀποθανὼν δὲ Αἰγύπτιος γίνεται τῇ ταφῇ. In the medieval letter of the legendary archpriest/king John, *ch.* 14, too, Ethiopia is called the country of the phoenix, see F. Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes I*, in *Abh. der. kngl. sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wiss.*, Philol.-hist. Klasse, 7, Leipzig, 1879, 911: *et avis quae vocatur fenix.*

[2] Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V. 393-394: Ἐπιδημεῖ δ' εἰς Αἴγυπτον, θνήσκει δ' Αἰθιοπίᾳ, / ὡς ὁ Φιλόστρατος φησι Ἀπολλωνίου βίῳ. Some writers mention only Egypt, but probably referring only to the place of the death and the rebirth of the phoenix: Antiphanes, *frg.* 175: Ἐν Ἡλίου μέν φασι γίνεσθαι πόλει φοίνικας; Statius, *Silvae*, II, 6, 87: *Phariaeque volucri*; Philostorgius, III, 11: ὁ φοῖνιξ ... παρ' αὐτοῖς (*sc.* Αἰγυπτίοις) τυγχάνει γινόμενος.

[3] Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, III, 49: ἐς Αἴγυπτον ἥκοντα, πέτεσθαι μὲν ἐν τῇ Ἰνδικῇ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον (*sc.* 500 years). ... ἐς καλίαν τε ἰζάνειν τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἀρώματος ποιουμένην αὐτῷ πρὸς ταῖς τοῦ Νείλου πηγαῖς.

[4] *Vita Apoll.*, I, 14. On the sources of the Nile: E. Honigmann, *Nil*, in *RE*, 17, 1936, 556-561 (oriental origin: 557-558).

[5] Ambrose, *De exc. fratris*, II, 59: *Avis in regione Arabiae, ... thecam, in qua resurrexit, ex Aethiopia in Lycaoniam vehet.* The most satisfactory explanation of *Lycaoniam* is given by Harnack, *Neue Studien*, 607: according to the Latin translation of *1 Clement*, 25 the bird goes *e regione Arabiae usque in Aegiptum, in colonia(m) quae vocatur Solis civitas;* Ambrose knew this translation; the *Lycaoniam* he mentions must go back ultimately to the *in colonia(m)* of the Latin *1 Clement*. *Cf.* Türk, 3460: "*Lykaonien wird wohl auf irgend ein Missverständnis zurückgehen*".

[6] *Cf.* Pliny, VII, 21: *Praecipue India Aethiopumque tractus miraculis scatent.*

land sea. It was also believed that the Ethiopians had originally been an Indian people.[1] Some writers of course knew that these names belonged to the inhabitants of difference regions. This seems to hold for Heliodorus, since he gave the two views together without indicating a preference and says that the phoenix came either from Ethiopia or India.[2]

In Ovid, Martial, and Lactantius Placidus the phoenix is mentioned in connection with Assyria, by which they probably meant Phoenicia.[3] It is not clear whether they thought that the phoenix lived there or went there to die, as Lactantius indicated.[4]

Attention must also be given in this connection to the abode assigned to the phoenix in the various versions of the *Physiologus*. The oldest version has the phoenix live in India and fetch perfumes from the forests of Lebanon for its cremation in Egypt.[5] Several reasons can be suggested for the introduction of the short visit to Lebanon.[6] In the later Byzantine version Lebanon has become the fixed dwelling-place of the phoenix, but this region is said to lie near India.[7] In the still later recension of Pseudo-Basilius, mention is no longer made of Lebanon and India; the phoenix brings its perfumes from Paradise.[8] A related conception is found in the phoenix passage from the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*: the phoenix feeds on the flowers of the trees of Lebanon and brings the perfumes on which it burns itself from Paradise.[9]

The shift of the phoenix's dwelling-place from India to Lebanon found in the second recension of the *Physiologus* may have been determined by a Christian theological factor. As early as the Old

[1] See R. Pietschmann, *Aithiopia*, in *RE*, 1, 1894, 1095-1102; Wecker, *India*, in *RE*, 9, 1916, 1268; R. Aigrin, *Arabie*, in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie ecclésiastique*, III, 1924, 1160-1161; Schippers, *Avitus*, 94-95.

[2] Heliodorus, VI, 3,3: τὸν φοίνικα τὸν ἐξ Αἰθιόπων ἤ Ἰνδῶν.

[3] See p. 51-52.

[4] Lactantius, vss. 60ff., see p. 182.

[5] *Gr. Physiologus*, 7: Ἔστι πετεινὸν ἐν τῇ Ἰνδίᾳ, φοῖνιξ λεγόμενον· κατὰ πεντακόσια ἔτη εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου.

[6] See p. 171.

[7] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: Ἔστι δὲ αὐτὸς ὁ φοῖνιξ πλησίον τῆς Ἰνδίας, μένει δὲ εἰς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ Λιβάνου.

[8] *Physiologus of Pseudo-Basilius*, 21: κατὰ τρεῖς χρόνους ἀπέρχεται ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ. For this, see p. 172-177.

[9] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 22-23 (see transl. on p. 45).

Testament, Lebanon was given an importance out of all proportion to simply a nearby chain of mountains. The prophet Hosea describes the future bliss that God will bestow on his recalcitrant people in images taken from Lebanon: Israel shall strike roots like Lebanon, its fragrance shall be as that of Lebanon, it shall flourish like a vine and be famous as the wine of Lebanon (*Hos.* xiv.5-8). The cedars of Lebanon are called, in *Ps.* civ.16, "the trees of the Lord which he has planted". From this the rabbis later deduced that the cedars were originally small and insignificant, having obtained their impressive size only after God had transplanted them in the Garden of Eden.[1] Ezekiel portrayed the eschatological bliss of Israel in the form of a world tree: a huge cedar will arise from a tender shoot that God will plant high on a lofty mountain, the highest mountain in Israel (*Ezek.* xvii.22-24).[2] In the negative sense Ezekiel applies this image in Chapter xxxi, where he describes a cedar of Lebanon towering high with its crown (vs. 3) and in whose shadow lived all the great nations (vs. 6). It surpassed the cedars in God's garden (vs. 8), and all the trees of Eden in the garden of God envied it (vs. 9). After its fall, all the trees of Eden, all the choicest and best of Lebanon, drew comfort in the world below (vs. 16).

For a proper understanding of these prophecies of Ezekiel, reference must be made to the commentaries.[3] In this context it will suffice to note that here the eschatological bliss of Israel is compared to a cedar of Lebanon and that the trees of the Garden of Eden are said to be "the choicest and the best of Lebanon". In our earthly reality Lebanon with its cedars forms the closest approximation to the paradise and the City of God of the eschaton.

In the later Jewish and Christian exegesis, this line was twisted to imply the signs of the glory of God in the present, in which the eschatological glory is already reflected. The Jewish interpreters of the *Targums* understood "Lebanon" preferentially as an indication of Jerusalem and especially of the temple;[4] the Qumrân community

[1] *Bereshit Rabbah,* XV, 1 (trans. H. Freedman, *Genesis Rabbah,* I, London, 1951, 151-152).

[2] For the meaning of the "highest mountain in Israel", see here, p. 314.

[3] *Cf.* e.g. W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel,* (Biblischer Kommentar A.T., XIII), Neukirchen, 1969, I, 388-390, II, 746-762.

[4] See the many texts mentioned by G. Vermes, *The symbolical interpre-*

took it as referring to the Council of the Community;[1] and the Christians could take it as a description of the Church.[2]

The cedars of Lebanon continue to appeal to the imagination of anyone who is in any way familiar with the language of the Bible; they evoke suggestions of power and imperishability. It is not improbable that the rich symbolism associated for both Jew and Christian with the concept "Lebanon" led to the substitution of Lebanon for India as the abode of the phoenix in the second recension of the *Physiologus*: for the Christians, a dwelling-place for this bird in paradisial Lebanon had much more point than one in fabulous India. In these texts it is difficult to ascribe a clearly defined symbolic meaning to Lebanon, but we can probably approach the sense most closely by regarding it as the earthly reflection of Paradise.

From these geographical indications of the province of the phoenix it is evident that in the ancient world and in later times as well, various traditions were current, although all of them pertained to the mysterious world of the East. This oriental element was certainly determined, at least in part, by a more general consideration: the permanent abode of the bird of the sun could hardly be situated anywhere except in the region in which the sun rises. Artemidorus seems to have drawn a logical conclusion from the uncertainty surrounding the exact location of the phoenix's dwelling-place when he wrote that people do not know where the bird comes from.[3]

A few authors give more detailed descriptions of the blessed abode of the phoenix: they place it in a world in which all the causes of our cares are lacking. In describing this world they could draw on

tation of Lebanon in the targums, in *JThS*, NS, 9, 1958, 1-12, especially 3-6.

[1] *Commentary on Habakkuk*, XII, 3-4 (*ad* ii.17), *cf*. Vermes, 7.

[2] See H. F. D. Sparks, *The symbolical interpretation of Lebanon in the Fathers*, in *JThS*. NS, 10, 1959, 264-279, especially 282.

[3] Artemidorus, IV, 47: ἔρχεται εἰς Αἴγυπτον ὅθεν οὐκ ἴσασιν ἄνθρωποι ... καὶ ἀφίπτασθαι Αἰγύπτου ἐκεῖσε ὅθεν ἥκεν ὁ πρὸ αὐτοῦ φοῖνιξ. In Suidas, who drew largely on Artemidorus for the phoenix, the now meaningless final sentence ἀφίπτασθαι εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐκεῖθεν ὅθεν must be modified according to Artemidorus. Several other writers who do not mention a native country also end their report on the phoenix in the same vague fashion: *Didascalia*, 40: *et tunc recedit denuo et pergit ibidem unde et venit* (the otherwise highly dependent *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15 here mention Arabia); Horapollo, II, 57: ὁ νεοσσὸς πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα ἄπεισιν.

a rich tradition, many centuries old. The happy circumstances under which the phoenix lives prove to be the same in many aspects as those of the abode of the gods, of the time of the Golden Age, of the Isles of the Blessed and the Elysian Fields, and of those prevailing for a few, partially legendary peoples for whom the primeval felicity had not entirely disappeared.[1] We need not go into the distinction between these different conceptions;[2] it will suffice to note here that in the description of these places and the conditions prevailing in them, the Classical authors formulated their thinking on the ideal life. Among the Christians, furthermore, Judaeo-Christian conceptions of Paradise exerted an influence.

Ovid was the first to locate the phoenix in Elysium. At the foot of a hill there is a forest of dark oak trees, the moist earth bears a cover of imperishable grass: this is said to be the abode of the pious birds, all evil birds being excluded; among its inhabitants are the swans, the long-lived phoenix, the peacock, and the dove.[3] Here the phoenix is not exceptional, it is only one of the many "pious" birds.

[1] In the following, for the Golden Age, the Isles of the Blessed, and the distant and legendary peoples, grateful use has been made of the extensive collection of Classical texts in A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *A documentary history of primitivism and related ideas, I: Primitivism and related ideas in Antiquity*, Baltimore, 1935. The second volume of this work has never appeared, but for the Early Church and the Middle Ages it has been continued on a different basis by G. Boas, *Essays on primitivism and related ideas in the Middle Ages*, Baltimore, 1948. For the Classical views, see also E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, 4th ed., Darmstadt, 1960, 178-288 ("Ethnographische Utopien, Fabeln und Romane"), especially 210-260, and B. A. van Groningen, *Heimwee en fantasie. Griekse dromen van volmaakt leven*, Amsterdam, 1947, especially 16-24. For the Early Christian and medieval conceptions of Paradise, see in addition to the above-mentioned work of Boas also H. R. Patch, *The other world according to descriptions in medieval literature*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1950, especially 134-174.

[2] For this, see Th. C. Vriezen, *Onderzoek naar de paradijsvoorstellingen bij de oude Semietische volken*, Thesis Utrecht, Wageningen, 1937, 1-11, whose distinctions are adopted by F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, *Paradis, I*, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., V, Tübingen, 1961, 95. A slightly more detailed classification in J. W. Schulte Nordholt, *De Tuin der Hesperiden*, Thesis Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1951, 9-19.

[3] Ovid, *Amores*, II, 6, 49-54: *Colle sub Elysio nigra nemus ilice frondet, / udaque perpetuo gramine terra viret. / Si qua fides dubiis, volucrum locus ille piarum / dicitur, obscenae quo prohibentur aves: / illic innocui late pascuntur olores / et vivax phoenix, unica semper avis.*

In the Middle Ages we encounter this same theme in the description of Paradise given by Ernaldus of Bonneval, not necessarily under the influence of Ovid: in Paradise the birds sang the praises of the Creator; high in the branches of the cedars and the other trees the long-lived phoenix and the parrot sang hymns of praise and the many-voiced sound of the singing birds formed a harmonious choir.[1]

But ordinarily the phoenix lives entirely alone in its glorious abode, of which Lactantius gave a detailed description. His phoenix lives in the futhermost East on a level plain without hills or valleys but rising twice six ells above our mountains whose peaks seem so high to us. Here lies the grove of the sun, a holy place with many trees, green with the splendour of eternal foliage. This plain is so high that it remained untouched when Phaethon set the world afire and when the waves of Deucalion swept over the earth.[2] Concerning this grove of the sun in which the phoenix dwells he also says that at its centre there is a spring called "the living"; this spring is clear, flows gently, and has an abundance of sweet water. Once every month it suddenly sends forth much more water, and in this way it irrigates the entire forest twelve times each year. Here, there are tall trees bearing ripe apples that do not fall to the ground.[3]

The passage on the spring and the trees in the grove of the sun have been considered by many scholars to show Biblical influences, reference being made to *Gen.* ii.9-14, *Ezek.* xlvii.1-12, and *Rev.* xxii.1-2.[4] It is, however, impossible to account satisfactorily for

[1] Ernaldus of Bonneval, *Hexaemeron*, (*PL* 189, 1537D): *et ne auditui desit, quae demulceat, melodia, superne in ramis cedrorum vel aliarum arborum phoenix vivax psallebat, et psittacus, et multiplici concinentium avium sono una erat consonantia.*

[2] Lactantius, vss. 5-14: *Illic planities tractus diffundit apertos, / nec tumulus crescit nec cava vallis hiat, / sed nostros montes, quorum iuga celsa putantur, / per bis sex ulnas eminet ille locus. / Hic solis nemus est et consitus arbore multa / lucus, perpetuae frondis honore virens. / Cum Phaethonteis flagrasset ab ignibus axis, / ille locus flammis inviolatus erat, / et cum diluvium mersisset fluctibus orbem, / Deucalioneas exsuperavit aquas.*

[3] Lactantius, vss. 25-30: *Sed fons in medio⟨est⟩, quem vivum nomine dicunt, / perspicuus, lenis, dulcibus uber aquis, / qui semel erumpens per singula tempora mensum / duodecies undis inrigat omne nemus. / Hic genus arboreum procero stipite surgens / non lapsura solo mitia poma gerit.*

[4] *Cf.* Fitzpatrick, 33, 35 and 66; Hubaux and Leroy, 56-57 and the other literature mentioned there. see also Rapisarda, 27-31.

all of Lactantius' details on the basis of these texts; there have always been other scholars who remained unconvinced,[1] and their opinion seemed to be confirmed by other details given by Lactantius about the abode of the phoenix for which striking Classical parallels can be cited.[2] In the following it will be shown that Lactantius took his inspiration not so much directly from the Bible as from the Judaeo-Christian eschatological ideas concerning the place in which the chosen are to enjoy eternal life. These conceptions, which have rarely been noticed by students of *De ave phoenice* and have never been properly appreciated, require discussion before we go any further.[3]

In the Old Testament we find, in addition to the description of the Garden of Eden in which the first people lived (*Gen.* ii), scattered remnants of a tradition concerning a divine garden in Eden charac-

[1] C. Pascal, *Sul carme "De ave phoenice" attribuito a Lattanzio*, in *Rendiconto della R. Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli*, NS, 18, Naples, 1904, 221-235, attempted to demonstrate that the entire poem was permeated by a Stoic spirit; *cf.* also his objections to the assumed Christian influence in his *Letteratura latina medievale. Nuovi saggi et note critiche*, Catania, 1909, 3-14. C. Landi, *Il carme "De ave phoenice" e il suo autore*, in *Atti e memorie della R. Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova*, NS, 31, 1914-1915, 33-73, concluded that the inspiration had been Neoplatonic.

[2] See below p. 327-330, for the climate and the absence of all evil.

[3] Only Fitzpatrick has pointed to a few texts forming a very distinct parallel with the conceptions in Lactantius; see here p. 316, nts. 1 and 5. But because she did not place them in a broader framework, she failed to see their great importance for the explanation of the abode of the phoenix in Lactantius. Unfortunately, I have been unable to gain access to G. Crescenti, *Gli elementi cristiani del carme De ave phoenice di Firmiano Lattanzio*, Messina, 1960, 37 pp. (*cf.* W. Schneemelcher, *Bibliographia patristica*, V, Berlin, 1962, 48, no. 637), reviewed by G. Rochefort in *REL*, 38, 1960, 376-377. S. Gennaro, *Il classicismo di Lattanzio nel De ave phoenice*, in *Convivium Dominicum. Studi sull'Eucarestia nei Padri della Chiesa antica e Miscellanea patristica*, Catania, 1959, 337-356 (also printed in *Miscellanea di studi di letteratura cristiana antica*, 9, 1959, 1-18 (*cf.* Schneemelcher, *Bibl. patr.*, V, 48, no. 638), has given numerous examples of a related choice of words in Lactantius and Lucretius, but these points of agreement are seldom relevant with respect to the content as well. Gennaro attempted to show that Lactantius, by using the same words as Lucretius, argued against the Epicurean view "*che proclamava il dissolvimento dell' individuo e la vanità della fede*" by demonstrating on the basis of the phoenix "*la Resurrezione di Cristo, che prepara la resurrezione dell' uomo e sua eternità in Dio*" (p. 355). But for the symbolism of the phoenix in Lactantius, see p. 381-385 here.

terized by great fertility, fabulous riches, and superb trees, situated on a mountain. Here we may mention *Gen.* xiii.10, *Isa.* li.3, *Ezek.* xxviii.13ff., xxxi.8f., xxxvi.35, and *Joel* ii.3.[1] This high garden of God in Eden is the Syro-Canaanite divine mountain, which was placed in the north. This is the mountain meant by Isaiah in a satyrical rendition of the arrogant ideas of the King of Babylonia (Isa. xiv.13): "I will scale the heavens, I will set my throne high above the stars of God, I will sit on the mountain where the gods meet, in the far recesses of the north".

In the Israelite religion this idea of the Canaanite Olympus was transferred to Mt Zion with Jerusalem and the temple, which explains how *Ps.* xlviii.2 could speak (literally) of "mount Zion, in the far north". According to Ugaritic texts, on the divine mountain there was a spring from which two rivers flowed. This too was transferred to Mt Zion without qualification, leading to the conception of the divine river rising from the temple in Jerusalem: "whose streams gladden the city of God", says *Ps.* xlvi.4. This river is repeatedly mentioned in the descriptions of the coming bliss of God. In addition to *Joel* iii.18 and *Zech.* xiv.8, special reference must be made to *Ezek.* xlvii.1-12 in which a river seen in a vision is described as flowing eastward from the temple. Many trees grew along its course. It is said that its water shall be life-giving, it shall make the salt water sweet. It shall be full of fish and its banks lined with fruit trees whose foliage does not wither and which perpetually bear fruit. They shall bear every month because they drink water coming from the temple; their fruit shall be for food and their foliage for enjoyment.

[1] For this, see Vriezen, *o.c.*, on the texts mentioned, and *ibid.*, p. 227. An elaborate discussion of the conceptions of Paradise in the Old Testament, the later Judaism and the New Testament in E. Cothenet, *Paradis*, in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Suppl., VI, 1960, 1177-1220. For the data following here about Syro-Canaanite conceptions and their impact on the Israelite religion, we refer to the important *Exkurs 5* in H. J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, I, (Biblischer Kommentar A.T., XV, 1), Neukirchen, 1960, 342-345 (*ad Ps.* xlvi). For a broader frame in which the conceptions mentioned should be placed, see e.g. A. J. Wensinck, *The ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth*, in *Verh. der Kon. Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afd. Letterkunde, NR, 17, 1, Amsterdam, 1916, especially 1-36 and M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, Paris, 1949, 30-37.

The integration of these Canaanite conceptions into Israelite religious thinking also explains why according to *Isa.* ii.2 and *Mic.* iv.1 "in the days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be set over all other mountains" and why the above-mentioned cedar of *Ezek.* xvii.22-23 shall be planted "high on a lofty mountain, the highest mountain in Israel".[1]

These ideas emerged powerfully in Jewish eschatology. This has been assumed to have occurred under the influence of related conceptions originating from Iran.[2] According to Iranian mythology, the garden of Yima, the king of the Golden Age, was situated on a high mountain called Hukairya.[3] At the top of this mountain rises Ardvi Sura Anahita, the divine spring from which all the waters of the earth come.[4] If there is any question of Iranian influence, which is not at all certain, this could only have been in the sense of a revival of an existent conception. On the basis of their content, the Jewish—and later the Christian eschatological ideas as well—can only be explained by the Old Testament data just discussed. The lofty divine garden and the transfer of the Canaanite ideas to the City of God make it clear how the final abode of the chosen could be portrayed on the one hand as Paradise situated on a high mountain or even in the third heaven and on the other hand as the heavenly Jerusalem.[5]

According to the *Ethiopic Enoch*, Enoch saw Paradise on a high

[1] *Cf.* also *Ezek.*, xl.2, where the seer sees the new temple on "a very high mountain', which has its echo in *Apoc.* xxi.10. This also explains why in the targums "Lebanon" could be taken as an indication of Jerusalem and the temple; see p. 308. For the identity between temple and Paradise, see Wensinck, *o.c.*, 13-16.

[2] Bousset and Gressmann, *Rel. des Judent.*, 489-490.

[3] Zend-Avesta, *Aban Yast*, VII, 25 (trans. J Darmesteter, *SBE*, 23, Oxford, 1883, 59).

[4] *Aban Yast* is devoted entirely to this river (*SBE*, 23, 52-84), see also *Yasna*, LXV (trans. L. H. Mills, *SBE*, 31, Oxford, 1887, 316-320). The Persian material is also discussed by L. H. Gray, *Blest, Abode of the (Persian)*, in *ERE*, 2, 1930, 702-704 and E. Cothenet, *o.c.*, 1197.

[5] The Judaic conceptions on this point are discussed by Bousset and Gressmann, *Rel. des Judent.*, 282-285, who, however, assume without good grounds that there is no relationship between the two conceptions (p. 285); also important: Cothenet, *o.c.*, 1207-1213.

mountain rising above all other mountains; in the middle, between the fragrant trees, stood the Tree of Life whose fruit is to be the food of the chosen.[1] Elsewhere in the same book it is said that the "garden of justice" (Paradise) lies in the north.[2] In the *Slavonic Enoch*, the seer sees paradise in the third heaven: the Tree of Life stands at its centre and from its roots rise two springs, one containing honey, milk, oil, and wine and dividing into four rivers; these rivers descend to the earthly Paradise from which they spread over the whole earth.[3] One obtains the impression that in these texts the conceptions relating to the paradisial mountain and the Garden of Eden are related to each other, the first having become the heavenly and the second the earthly Paradise. It is clear that the author could not have taken the idea that the earthly rivers rise at the foot of the Tree of Life from *Gen.* ii.10-14, which speaks only of a river arising in Eden and dividing into four streams in or near Paradise. The idea of the source at the foot of the Tree of Life is also clearly expressed in the anonymous poem *De ligno vitae* and is distinctly implied in other texts.[4] Without detailed localization, the spring within Paradise is mentioned frequently: according to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the patriarch saw in the Garden of Eden the source of the river flowing thence to the earth;[5] and in Christian poetry this source became a persisting component of the descriptions of Paradise, as shown for instance by Sedulius, Marius Victor, Avitus, and in the *Carmen de resurrectione*.[6]

The image of a Paradise on a high mountain took firm root in

[1] *Eth. Enoch*, 24 and 25.

[2] *Eth. Enoch*, 77, 3; in 70, 3 it is placed in the north-west, and in 32, 2ff. in the east. For the various localizations of Paradise in the *Eth. Henoch*, see Cothenet, *o.c.*, 1209-1210.

[3] *Slav. Enoch*, 5 (Vaillant, 9, 89-91 (long recension) = *ch.* 8, Charles). In the *Apocalypse of Moses*, 37, 5, and the *Apocalypse of Paul*, 19 (see below, p. 318) Paradise is also placed in the third heaven, as also assumed by Paul in 2 *Cor.* xii.2-4.

[4] Pseudo-Tertullian, *De ligno vitae*, 26-27 (*PL*, 2, 1113 C): *ecce sub ingenti ramorum tegminis umbra fons erat; Apocalypse of Paul*, 45 (see below, p. 319). *Cf.* also p. 320., n. 6.

[5] *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 21, 6.

[6] Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, III, 173-174; Marius Victor, *Alethia*, I, 269; Avitus, I, 258-259; Pseudo-Cyprianus, *Carmen ad Flav. Felicem de resurrectione*, 238-239; see also texts mentioned on p. 319, and 320, n. 6.

Christianity. Ephraem the Syrian says in the first of his *Hymni de Paradiso* that the peaks of all other mountains lie below that of Paradise and that the waves of the Flood kissed the feet of the Paradise mountain in adoration but drowned all the other mountains.[1] The *Cave of Treasures*, also of Syrian origin, says that Paradise reaches three spans above the other mountains "according to the measure of the Spirit".[2] In its description of the Deluge, Ephraem's indication is found in a more detailed form: the water of the Flood rose 25 ells "according to the measure of the Spirit" above the highest mountains and lifted Noah's ark until it reached the border of Paradise. The Flood—thus blessed and purified by Paradise—turned, kissed the heels of Paradise, and gave itself over to the destruction of the entire earth.[3] The idea that Paradise was spared at the time of the Flood also goes back to Jewish sources, although it is evident from the rabbinical and the apocryphal literature that there was no general agreement on this point.[4]

The Paradise situated in a high place is also encountered in a sermon formerly ascribed to Basil of Caesarea: a select place projecting above all creation and without shadow because of its height.[5]

[1] Ephraem, *Hymni de paradiso*, I, 4 (trans. E. Beck, *CSCO*, 175, 1-2): "*Mit den Augen des Geistes sah ich das Paradies, / und die Gipfel aller Berge lagen unter seinem Gipfel. / Bis an seine Ferse nur kam das Haupt der Flut, / ... Die Ferse (des Paradieses) küsste sie, das Haupt jeden Berges bezwang sie*". Fitzpatrick, 63, refers to the Greek text in J. S. Assemani, *Opera omnia quae extant Graece ...*, III, Romae, 1743, 563.

[2] *Cave of Treasures*, 3, 15 (trans. C. Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, I, Leipzig, 1883, 5).

[3] *Cave of Treasures*, 19, 2-4 (trans. Bezold, 23). The 25 ells mentioned in this passage are not consistent with the 3 spans mentioned in 3, 15.

[4] According to some rabbis, Noah's dove brought the olive leaf from the Mt of Olives, because the Holy Land was not affected by the Flood, but according to others it was indeed flooded, and they therefore thought that the dove had flown to Paradise, *cf.* Ginzberg, I, 164, V, 185-186. *Cf.* also Wensinck, *Navel of the earth*, (see p. 313, n. 1), 14-16, who refers also to the Samaritan idea that the holy mountain Gerizim was not covered by the Flood, and similar Mohammedan ideas concerning the Ka'ba. According to the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 4, 10, the waters reached even to Paradise: εἰσῆλθε τὸ ὕδωρ εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἦρεν πᾶν ἄνθος; in *Jubilees*, 4, 24, mention is made of the flooding of all Eden, but the foregoing does not imply that the *Garden* of Eden was flooded.

[5] Pseudo-Basil, *Orationes*, III: *De Paradiso*, 2 (*PG* 30, 64 B): τόπον ἐπιλεξάμενος ἐπιτήδειον ὑπερφέροντα τῆς ὅλης κτίσεως καὶ διὰ τὸ ὕψος ἀνεπισκότητον.

Jerome interpreted "God's holy hill" referred to in *Ezek* xxviii.14 as Paradise.[1] In Avitus, Paradise is a sacred grove in a high place forbidden to mortals and lying beyond India, where heaven and earth meet.[2] The general acceptance of this lofty situation is shown by Early Christian art, where Paradise is consistently represented as a mountain from which the four world rivers arise.[3] The idea of the high mountain of Paradise persisted throughout the Middle Ages, and we even find it in the writings of Columbus, who thought he had discovered the mountain.[4] The tradition that the great height of the mountain saved it from the Deluge occurs also in Western medieval literature, for instance in the Venerable Bede and Peter Lombard.[5]

The conception of the heavenly Jerusalem is known specially from *Rev.* xxi.9-xxii.5; John saw the new Jerusalem descend from heaven to a great high mountain.[6] In it he saw the river of the Water of Life, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side of this river stood a Tree of Life which bears twelve times annually, once each month; its leaves serve for the healing of the nations. The derivation of this conception from the

[1] Jerome, *Comm. in Ezech.*, IX, 28 (*PL* 25, 272 A): *Haud dubio quin paradisum significet* ...; *ibid.* (272 B, *ad Hebr.*, xii.22): *Vel certe mons sanctus Dei, paradisus, ut diximus, intelligendus est.*

[2] Avitus, I, 213-214: *Lucus inaccessa cunctis mortalibus arce / permanet aeterno conclusus limite; idem*, II, 152: *paradisi in vertice.*

[3] For this, see F. v. d. Meer, *Maiestas Domini, théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien.* (Studi di Antichita cristiana, XIII), Rome-Paris, 1938, 32-81 and *passim*, and pl. XX, XXVI, 2, and XXVIII here.

[4] See R. H. Patch, (see p. 310, n. 1), 144-174; for Columbus: Boas, *Essays on primitivism*, 172-173.

[5] Beda, *Hexaemeron*, I (*PL* 91, 44 A): *unde nec aquae diluvii, quae totam nostri orbis superficiem altissime cooperuerent, ad eum pervenire potuerunt*; literally adopted by Rabanus Maurus, *Comm. in Gen.*, I (*PL* 107, 476 BC); Strabo, *Glossa ordinaria in lib. Gen.*, II, 8 (*PL* 113, 86C) and Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, II, 17, 4 (*PL* 192, 686). Patch, *o.c.*, 151, also mentions Alexander Neckam and Godfrey of Viterbo.

[6] G. von Rad, *Die Stadt auf dem Berge*, in *Evangelische Theologie*, 8, 1948-1949, 447, has related *Matth.*, v. 14: "A town that stands on a hill" to the "mountain of the Lord's house" of *Isa.*, ii.2 and *Micah* iv.1 (see above, p. 314). This is confirmed by the *Gospel according to Thomas, log.* 32: "A city being built on a high mountain (and) fortified cannot fall nor can it (ever) be hidden"; *cf.* J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, 7th ed., Göttingen, 1965, 215.

temple-river of *Ezek.* xlvii is unmistakable.[1] According to the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, God had already shown the heavenly Jerusalem of the eschaton to Adam before he sinned and to Abraham and Moses.[2] The great similarity of the heavenly Jerusalem and the Paradise of the end of time in the eschatological expectations of later Judaism and early Christianity is shown by such texts as the *Testament of Dan*, ch. 5, 12: "And the saints shall rest in Eden and in the New Jerusalem shall the righteous rejoice", and 4 *Ezra* 7, 26: "Then shall the city that now is invisible appear, and the land which is now concealed be seen."[3]

The various ideas concerning the abode of the elect crossed and recrossed each other. Almost every one of these eschatological ideas can be found in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. After a visit to the abode of the damned, Paul is first brought by the angel guiding him to the Paradise in the third heaven, where he meets Enoch and Elijah, who have never known death.[4] Then the angel shows him the Land of Promise where Christ and his saints are to live during the millenium and where the souls of the just already live. He sees there a river of milk and honey bordered by trees covered with thousands of fruits which they bear twelve times each year.[5] The origin of the river is no longer mentioned: here the monthly-bearing trees have become a symbol of the marvelous fertility of the coming aeon.[6] The theme of

[1] The temple river with the trees also occurred in the eschatological expectations of the rabbis, *cf.* H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrash*, III, Munich, 1926, 854-857. The conception of the spring in the temple was so common that it is found in the *Letter of Aristeas*, 89, and in Tacitus, *Hist.*, V, 12 as actually existent, *cf.* M. A. Beek, *Inleiding tot de apocalyptiek van het oud- en nieuwtestamentisch tijdvak*, (Theologia, VI), Haarlem, 1950, 24.

[2] *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, 4, 3-6.

[3] *Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs*, VII, 5, 12: καὶ ἀναπαύσονται ἐν Ἐδὲμ ἅγιοι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς νέας Ἱερουσαλὴμ εὐφρανθήσονται δίκαιοι. 4 *Ezra*, 7, 26: *et apparebit sponsa et apparescens civitas, et ostendetur quae nunc subducitur terra*; *cf.* also 8, 52; 10, 54; 13, 36.

[4] *Apoc. of Paul*, 19-20.

[5] *Ibid.*, 21-22.

[6] In the rabbinical literature the tree bearing twelve times also occurs without the temple river, *cf.* E. Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, (Handbuch zum N.T.), 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1953, 176. For the uncommon fertility in the eschaton, see also *Syr. Apoc. of Baruch*, 29, 5 and the fragment of Papias in Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, V, 33, 3-4, *cf.* A. Resch, *Agrapha*, (*TU*,

monthly fertility is also found in 4 *Ezra*, in an apocryphon cited by Epiphanius, and in Avitus.[1] After the Land of Promise, Paul is shown the City of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is circled by four rivers, one of honey, the others of milk, wine, or oil, bearing the same names as the rivers in *Gen.* ii.11-14.[2] At the end of this apocalypse, probably representing an addition to the original text[3], the visit made to the Paradise of Adam and Eve is recounted and there Paul sees a tree on which the Holy Ghost rests and from whose roots flows the water forming the source of the four world rivers.[4] That these places described in the *Apocalypse of Paul* are almost certainly the same, is shown by the fact that he meets the same Old Testament saints both in the City of Christ and in the Paradise of Adam and Eve.

After this rather detailed but necessary discussion of the Judaeo-Christian conceptions concerning the abode of the elect, we are ready to return to *De ave phoenice* of Lactantius, whose description of the abode of the phoenix, as recapitulated above,[5] can be best explained by the assumption that its basis was formed by the Judaeo-Christian conception of the mountain of paradise.

The "grove of the sun" in which the phoenix resides was located on a mountain plateau rising twelve ells above the highest mountains in the world and which was untouched by the catastrophes associated with the names of Phaethon and Deucalion. For the latter, Lucan's report that the peak of Mt Parnassus did not disappear under the waves of Deucalion's flood might be considered,[6] but it is more likely that here Lactantius was alluding to the tradition that the

NF, 15, 3/4) 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1906 (Reprint: Darmstadt, 1967), 166-167 where the texts of Epiphanius and 4 *Ezra* cited below are also mentioned.

[1] 4 *Ezra*, 2, 18: *paravi tibi arbores duodecim gravatas variis fructibus;* Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 26, 5, 1: εἶδον δένδρον φέρον δώδεκα καρποὺς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν μοι· τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς; Avitus, I, 231-232: *Nam quidquid nobis toto nunc nascitur anno, / menstrua maturo dant illic tempora fructu. Cf.* also the Coptic *Life of Apa Onnophrius*, cited on p. 142, n. 4.

[2] *Apoc. of Paul*, 23-30.

[3] See James, *Apocr. N.T.*, 525-526, 555.

[4] *Apoc. of Paul*, 45-51.

[5] See p. 311.

[6] Lucan, V, 75-76: *Hoc solum fluctu terras mergente cacumen / eminuit,* mentioned by Fitzpatrick, 63.

Paradise mountain was not covered by the Deluge. The mention of Phaeton and Deucalion does not argue against Lactantius' authorship or against a Christian influence in his poem, because in a summarization of the catastrophes that can overcome all humanity, in his *Divinae Institutiones*, he gives the same names in the same sequence.[1]

The mountain on which the phoenix lives rises above the highest mountains of the world, like the Paradise mountain in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Many editors and commentators have had difficulties with the small difference in height given in *De ave phoenice*, i.e. twice six ells.[2] This difference is indeed surprising, but a still smaller one is given in the Syrian *Cave of Treasures*, where it is put at 3 spans, albeit with the qualification that this is calculated "according to the measure of the Spirit".[3] It is possible that both in Lactantius and in the *Cave of Treasures* a tradition concerning the height of the Paradise mountain was used that was no longer clearly understood by the authors and which we can in any case no longer explain.

In the middle of the grove of the sun there is a spring.[4] We have seen that according to the *Slavonic Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and the *Carmen de ligno vitae* there is a spring at the foot of the Tree of Life from which the world rivers later arise.[5] According to *Gen.* ii.9, this tree stood in the centre of Paradise, which is also mentioned by Enoch. Isidore of Seville also says that a spring welled up in the centre of Paradise.[6] Lactantius drew here on the Judaeo-Christian

[1] Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, II, 10, 23: ... *vel incendio in orbem inmisso, quale iam fuisse sub Phaethonte dicitur, vel diluvio aquarum, quale sub Deucalione traditur, cum praeter unum hominem genus omne deletum est.*

[2] See Fitzpatrick, 61.

[3] See p. 316. In the Greek system of measures, one ell is equal to two spans, *cf.* F. N. Price, *Measures*, in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1953, 547; but according to Epiphanius one ell covers three spans, *cf.* J. E. Dean, *Epiphanius' treatise on weights and measures, The Syriac version*, (Orient. Inst. of the Univ. of Chicago, Stud. in anc. orient. civilization, no. 11), Chicago, 1935, 70. By the expression "measure of the Spirit", the *Cave of Treasures* probably indicates that here "span" must not be taken in the ordinary sense but as a much greater unit of length.

[4] See p. 311, n. 3.

[5] See p. 315 and 319.

[6] Isidore, *Etymol.*, XIV, 3, 3: *E cuius medio fons prorumpens totum nemus inrigat*; *cf.* also Ernaldus of Bonneval, *Hexaemeron*, (*PL* 189, 1535 B): *Emanebat e medio fons vitreus irrigans et humectans omne gramen radicitus.*

Paradise tradition, and for him too we must consider not only a spring but also a river arising from it, since this clarifies the passage concerning the monthly watering of the grove. We have not yet spoken of the climate in the abode of the phoenix, but we shall see that according to Lactantius the heavens there are always cloudless and that rain is unknown there.[1] In a region in which no rain falls, the vegetation is completely dependent on a regular, heavy dew or a periodic flooding by a river. Avitus, who also says that it does not rain in Paradise, assumes that dew is responsible for growth there.[2] Lactantius makes a repeatedly flooding river responsible, analogous to the Nile in virtually rainless Egypt. Just as the Nile usually flows calmly through Egypt but once each year overflows its banks and fructifies the entire country, so does the gentle water of the spring drench the grove of the sun once each month.[3] The meaning of this is obvious: each flood makes a harvest possible, and since the abode of the phoenix is watered once a month, it can have twelve harvests each year. Thus, Lactantius assumes, with Ezekiel, the *Apocalypse of John*, 4 *Ezra*, the apocryphon in Epiphanius, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and Avitus, that the trees bear fruit each month.[4] Despite the

[1] Lactantius, vss. 23-24, see below, p. 327, n. 3. Fitzpatrick, 65, has correctly pointed out that vs. 25 ff. (on the source) may not be taken out of the context of the foregoing. The absence of the rain and the moistening of the earth by a spring may have arisen from the reading of the *Septuagint* (and the *Vulgate*) in *Gen.* ii.5 and 6: οὐ γὰρ ἔβρεξεν ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, ..., πηγὴ δὲ ἀνέβαινεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπότιζεν πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς.

[2] Avitus, I, 225-226: *Nec poscit natura loci quos non habet imbres, / sed contenta suo dotantur germina rore*; on the source: vs. 251 ff., 258.

[3] *Cf.* Lactantius, vss. 26, 27 (p. 311, n. 3): *lenis ... erumpens* with Avitus' description of the Nile, I, 264, 266: *lenis ... perrumpit.*

[4] Hubaux and Leroy, 58-61, were of the opinion that several scholars mistakenly took the abode of the phoenix in Lactantius as Paradise. They saw such a great difference between the Biblical details and those of Lactantius concerning the monthly-bearing tree and the monthly irrigation of the grove of the sun that they felt compelled to seek another explanation, which they thought they had found in the description given by Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, vss. 243-253, of the oasis Elim (*cf. Exod.*, xv.27), where twelve springs arise from one rock and there are seventy palm-trees. They concluded that it was from this or a related text that Lactantius took the idea of a spring flowing twelve times a year, and therefore that Lactantius describes not Paradise but an oasis. They ignored the situation of the grove of the sun in a high place. See also here p. 331, n. 3, for their opinion that the description of the Essenes in Pliny, V, 73, is related to the Classical views on the phoenix, including those on its abode.

poetic and perhaps somewhat artificial form of expression, Lactantius reveals a Christian influence here too.

The report of the ripe apples that shall never fall to the ground must also be regarded in the light of the monthly fertility. All it means is that the supply of apples on the trees in the abode of the phoenix, as on those along the temple river of *Ezek.* xlvii.12, can never be exhausted; these trees are always hung with apples. In 4 *Ezra* 7, 123 (53) and in Aphraates the same is said about the trees of the eschatological paradise.[1] According to Lactantius, the trees have tall trunks; and this is also noticed by Paul during his visit to the Land of Promise, where he even saw palm trees thirty ells high.[2] The grove of the sun is clad in the green of eternal foliage, just as according to Enoch the leaves, flowers, and branches of the Tree of Life never fade.[3] The *Gospel according to Thomas* and Aphraates also say that the trees of Paradise never drop their leaves.[4]

The theme of marvellous fertility is, however, not restricted to the Biblical and Judaeo-Christian images of Paradise; it also occurs in many other descriptions of a paradisial region. This theme is a persisting element in the fantasies about a perfect, care-free life, in which mankind everywhere in the world has always indulged.[5] The Greeks and Romans visualized a boundless fertility in the Golden

[1] 4 *Ezra*, 7, 123: *et quoniam ostendetur paradisus cuius fructus incorruptus perseverat.* This text and *Eth. Enoch*, 24 (see n. 3 below) were first referred to by H. Dechent, *Über die Echtheit des Phönix von Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 35, 1880, 42. Aphraates, *Demonstr.*, XXII, 12: *De morte et novissimis temporibus*, (trans. Parisot, in *PS*, I, 1894, 1015): *arbores illic pulcherrimae plantatae sunt, quarum fructus non deficiunt nec decidunt folia.*Lactantius' influence is unmistakable in Petrus Damiani, *Hymnus de gloria paradisi*, 3, 4 (*PL* 145, 862 D): *pendent poma floridorum non lapsura nemorum.*

[2] *Apocalypse of Paul*, 22 (ed. Th. Silverstein, 137): *et vidi ibi palmas cubitorum XXX, alias autem cubitorum X.* The text of James, in *TS*, II, 3, Cambridge, 1893, 22 gives 20 and 10 ells. For the palms, see also n. 3 here.

[3] *Eth. Enoch*, 24 (trans. Charles, *Apoc. and Pseud.*, II, 204): "And its leaves and blooms and woods wither not forever: and its fruit (is beautiful and its fruit) resembles the dates of a palm". Lactantius too may have thought of palm trees, *cf.* Hubaux and Leroy, 60-61. For the eternal blooming of the flowers of Paradise, see also *Slav. Enoch*, 5, and *Apoc. of Peter*, (Akhmim frg.), 15 (trans. James, *Apoc. N.T.*, 508).

[4] *Gospel according to Thomas, log.* 19: "And their leaves do not fall"; for Aphraates, see n. 1 here.

[5] See e.g. art. *Blest, Abode of the*, in *ERE*, 2, 1930, 680-710.

Age, on the Isles of the Blessed, and among such peoples as the Scythians, the Cyclopes, and the Phaeacians, where ploughing and sowing are superfluous and land is not parcelled out.[1] The descriptions of these regions, given with such evident delight and abundant detail, also had a great influence on the Christian literature concerning Paradise.[2] The clearest parallel with the monthly-bearing fruit trees is found in Lucian's description of the Isle of the Blessed, where the grape vines bear fruit twelve times a year and the fruit trees even thirteen times a year, since in the month of Minos they bear twice.[3] Although it is conceivable that with his lively imagination Lucian, improvising on the traditional theme of the fertility of the abode of the Blessed,[4] arrived independently at the idea of a monthly fertility, it is also quite possible that for him, too, this idea ultimately went back to a Jewish or Christian source.[5]

Concerning the spring in the grove of the sun that was responsible

[1] Spontaneous genesis: Hesiod, *Erga*, 117-118: Καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα / αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον; Plato, *Politic.*, 274c; Lucian, *Sat. Epist.*, I, 20, 402; Babrius, *Fab. Aesop.*, prol. 12; Ovid, *Metam.*, I, 108-110 (Golden Age). Hesiod, *Erga*, 171-173: ἐν μακάρων νήσοισι πὰρ' Ὠκεανὸν βαθύδινην, / ὄλβιοι ἥρωες, τοῖσιν μελιηδέα καρπὸν / τρὶς ἔτεος θάλλοντα φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα; Horatius, *Epod.*, XVI, 41 (Isles of the Blessed). Homer, *Odys.*, IX, 108-109: οὔτε φυτεύουσιν χερσὶν φυτὸν οὔτ' ἀρόωσιν, / ἀλλὰ τά γ' ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα πάντα φύονται (Cyclopes), VII, 112-126 (Phaeacians); Mela, III, 37; Diodorus Sic., *Bibl. Hist.*, II, 47, 1 (Hyperboreans); Aeschylus, *frg.* 196 (Gabii); Strabo, XI, 4, 3 (Albani); Junior Philosophus, *Expos. totius mundi et gentium*, E. 6 (Camerini). Unparcelled land: Ovid, *Amor.*, III, 8, 41-42: *nec valido quisquam terras scindebat aratro, / signabat nullo limite mensor humum*; Virgil, *Georg.*, I, 125-127; Tibullus, *Eleg.*, I, 3, 43-44 (Golden Age). Horatius *Odae*, III, 24, 12-13 (Scythians). The first Christian mention of spontaneous genesis and the unparcelled land is found in *Oracula Sibyllina*, II, 319-321: γαῖα δ' ἴση πάντων οὐ τείχεσιν οὐ περιφραγμοῖς / διαμεριζομένη καρποὺς τότε πλείονας οἴσει / αὐτομάτη, κοινοί τε βίοι καί πλοῦτος ἄμοιρος.

[2] See e.g. Dracontius, *De laud. Dei*, I, 180-189; Avitus, I, 225-237; and Pseudo-Cyprian, *Ad Flav. Felic. de resurrectione*, 193-239; *cf.* also Ephraem, *Hymn. de paradiso*, X.

[3] Lucian, *Verae narrationes*, II, 13: αἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄμπελοι δωδεκάφοροί εἰσιν καὶ κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον καρποφοροῦσιν· τὰς δὲ ῥοιὰς καὶ τὰς μηλέας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ὀπώραν ἔλεγον εἶναι τρισκαιδεκάφορον· ἑνὸς γὰρ μηνὸς τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς Μινῴου δὶς καρποφορεῖν.

[4] *Cf.* Hesiod, *Erga*, 172-173 (see n. 1) where a threefold annual fertility is assumed, and Diodorus Sic., *Bibl. Hist.*, II, 47, 1 (for Hyperboreans, twofold).

[5] See also p. 339 for the dew as food in Lucian.

for the monthly fertility, Lactantius says explicitly that it was called "Living". A *fons vivus* is a source of living, fresh, running water; the opponents of the view that *De ave phoenice* contains Christian ideas have not neglected to indicate a number of examples of this import in Latin literature.[1] But on the other hand, the concepts "living source" and "living water" acquired a deep symbolic significance in Christianity and became identical with "Source of Life" and "Water of Life".[2] The emphasis with which Lactantius gives the name of the spring [3] and the agreement we have shown between this spring and the river of "Water of Life" (*Rev.* xxii.1), which according to the Judaeo-Christian conception arises in the City of God and in Paradise, make it rather certain that the religious meaning of "Source of Life" resonates in the "living source" of Lactantius.[4] This spring is clear, just as the "Water of Life" in *Rev.* xxii: 1 is clear as crystal; it is has an abundance of sweet water, just as the temple river in *Ezek.* xlvii.8-12, whose waters sweeten the Dead Sea.

Various elements of Lactantius' description of the abode of the phoenix can be shown to have Classical parallels. This agreement holds especially for the aspects we have not yet discussed—the climate and the absence of all evil—but also applies to some of the elements explained above on the basis of the Jewish and Christian Paradise traditions. Such correspondence could occur because on the one hand the Greeks and Romans shared various conceptions with

[1] Hubaux and Leroy, 58, n. 1, give the most examples, e.g. Martial, *Epigr.*, II, 90, 8: *fons vivus*.

[2] For a discussion of the many Early Christian data and reference to other studies, see E. Peterson, *Die "Taufe" im Acherusischen See*, in his *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis*, Freiburg i. Br., 1959, 323-327, and J. Daniélou, *L'eau vive et le poisson*, in his *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs*, Paris, 1961, 49-63.

[3] Already pointed to by A. Riese, *Ueber den Phönix des Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, NF, 31, 1876, 447.

[4] This seems to be confirmed by Lactantius' (vss. 37-38) statement that in the first glow of morning the phoenix plunges *ter quater* in the *pias undas*. We have seen above that here Lactantius used a tradition concerning the eagle and the griffin, see p. 282. But it is highly probable that he drew on this tradition to refer to baptism ἐν ὕδατι ζῶντι (*Didache*, 7, 1). This conception was Judaeo-Christian in origin (*cf.* Daniélou, *o.c.*, 51) and was coupled with e.g. that of Paradise, the City of God, and the Jordan (Daniélou, 60-63). The daily submersion of the phoenix in the *fons vivus*, which became a river bestowing great fertility, is reminiscent of the daily baptismal rites of the Mandeans in "the great Jordan of living waters" (see Daniélou, 50, 63).

other peoples outside their sphere of influence and on the other because Lactantius, "the Christian Cicero", was so familiar with Classical literature and drew freely on this background.[1]

For example, the mountain of the gods, which in Jewish imagery devloped into the mountain of Paradise, was also well known in the Classical world. We of course think first in this connection of Olympus, but there is also the mountain, inaccessible to man, on Cyprus, where according to Claudian the palace of Venus was situated.[2] The Classical world also knew the idea of a beautiful grove in which a clear spring rises. For comparison with Lactantius reference has been made to the "spring of the sun" located, according to Diodorus Siculus, in the oasis of Ammon,[3] and to the description by the same author of the island of Panchaia: there is a spring of fresh water, which is called "water of the sun" and bestows health. The spring is ringed by unusually tall trees, the palms are especially high and bear an extraordinary quantity of fruit; all kinds of birds nest in these trees and their beautiful plumage and melodious song delight the eye and the ear.[4] According to Apuleius, Psyche saw a grove of high trees and a crystal-clear spring in the valley where she was to experience her great love, and precisely in the centre of the grove stood the palace of Amor.[5] The "spring of the sun" and the "water of the sun" of which Diodorus speaks are reminiscent of the "grove of the sun" of Lactantius. His choice of this name for the paradisial abode of the phoenix was determined by the close relationship between the phoenix and the sun, which just Lactantius puts so much emphasis on.[6] It may be that for this name he drew on an existing

[1] Lactantius' knowledge of the Classical literature is extensively discussed by W. Krause, *Die Stellung der frühchristlichen Autoren zur heidnischen Literatur*, Vienna, 1958, 179-254, see there also the statistics on p. 126 and 129

[2] Claudian, *Epithalamium*, 49-85, *cf.* vss. 49-50: *Mons latus Ionium Cypri praeruptus obumbrat, / invius humano gressu*; *cf.* Avitus, I, 213-214; see p. 317, n. 2; also Patch, (p. 310, n. 1), 175-178.

[3] Diodorus Sic., *Bibl. Hist.*, XVII, 50, 4: ὑπάρχει κρήνη διὰ τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ὀνομαζομένη Ἡλίου κρήνη.

[4] Diodorus Sic., *Bibl. Hist.*, V, 43, 2: a spring of sweet water forming a river, which in 44, 3 is called Ἡλίου ὕδωρ.

[5] Apuleius, *Metam.*, V, 1: *videt lucum proceris et vastis arboribus consitum, videt fontem vitreo latice perlucidum; medio luci meditullio prope fontis adlapsum domus regia est aedificata.*

[6] See e.g. p. 281.

tradition. In this connection we may refer to one of the versions of the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, where Alexander writes to Aristotle about a region visited by the rising sun and consecrated to the sun and moon: this was a place with very delightful trees, which his guides called *paradisus*.[1] These parallels clearly show that the non-Christian contemporaries of Lactantius could recognize many familiar images in *De ave phoenice*. But taken as a whole, the descriptions in it of the abode of the phoenix cannot be explained from the Classical models but only from the Judaeo-Christian conceptions concerning Paradise.

The view that the phoenix lives in Paradise is also found in the rabbinical traditions. The bird *ḥôl*, which was also called *malḥam* or *maltam*, was said to have been the only bird or beast to refuse the fruit offered by Eve and for this reason to have been given the gift of eternal life by God.[2] Here it is probably also assumed that this bird was allowed to remain in Paradise after the Fall. According to one tradition, after the fall of man the Jewish phoenix went to reside in the mysterious city of Luz, to which even the angel of death could not gain admittance.[3] It is not in itself impossible that Lactantius was aware of these traditions to some extent, but it is not necessary to assume that this suggested to him the idea of placing the phoenix in Paradise, since the conception is totally determined by the symbolism of the phoenix. In early Christain times the bird became a symbol of the resurrection of the flesh and of life in the heavenly Paradise or the new Jerusalem. In several traditional subjects of Early Christian art, i.e. the *Traditio legis* and the *Adventus in gloria*, we see the phoenix in Paradise perched on a palm tree.[4] In the apse of S. Giovanni in Laterano at Rome, the phoenix is shown in the City of God, also on a palm tree.[5] The phoenix in Paradise or

[1] Julius Valerius, *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, III, 24: *Eo ergo cum venissemus, ducor in quendam locum arboribus consitum vel amoenissimis. Hunc illi paradisum vocitavere.*

[2] For the texts, see Ginzberg, *Legends*, I, 32, 74, V, 51, n. 151, and 95, n. 67. For the bird *ḥôl* and *Job* xxix.18, see p. 58. Ginzberg, V, 51, n. 151, on *malḥam* or *maltam*: "*a word of obscure origin which is very likely corrupt*'.

[3] See Ginzberg, *Legends*, IV, 30, 175, V, 51, n. 151, 119, n. 113, VI, 186, n. 28.

[4] See pls. XXIV-XXX; also pl. XXXV.

[5] See pl. XX.

in the heavenly Jerusalem is a symbol of the redeemed in the eschatological glory. We shall attempt to show further on that in *De ave phoenice* Lactantius may well have had in mind the realization of the eschaton within the time of earthly life.[1]

Lactantius provides some other details about the abode of the phoenix whose form and content were clearly determined by Classical ideas, but without detriment to the hypothesis that he was thinking of the Judaeo-Christian Paradise. His phoenix lives in an isolated fortunate place in the extreme East, where the huge gate of the eternal skies stands open; in this region summer and winter are unknown, and it is eternally springtime.[2] Lactantius returns to this point in more detail: violent storms are unknown there, frost does not cover the earth with its icy dew, there are no clouds, and no torrential rains fall.[3] From the time of Homer these had been familiar themes in the literature about the abode of the gods, the Golden Age, and the Isles of the Blessed.[4] But the striking Classical parallels

[1] See p. 384-385.

[2] Lactantius, 1-4: *Est locus in primo felix oriente remotus, / qua patet aeterni maxima porta poli, / nec tamen aestivos hiemisve propinquus ad ortus, / sed qua Sol verno fundit ab axe diem. Cf.* for vs.2 (*patet maxima porta poli)* the citation from Ennius in *Div. Instit.*, I, 18, 11: *mi soli caeli maxima porta patet.* Especially the form of *De ave phoenice (porta poli)* recurs repeatedly in later authors, see Fitzpatrick, 58 and P. von Winterfeld, *Ad Lactantium, De ave phoenice*, in *Philologus*, 62, 1903, 478-480. Gennaro, *Il classicismo di Lattanzio*, (see p. 312, n. 3), 347, compares vs.1 of Lactantius with Lucretius, *De rer. nat.*, I, 333 and II, 331: but no agreement can be distinguished either in the choice of words or in the content apart from the shared occurrence of the word *locus.*

[3] Lactantius, 21-24: *Non ibi tempestas nec vis furit horrida venti / nec gelido terram rore pruina tegit, / nulla super campos tendit sua vellera nubes, / nec cadit ex alto turbidus umor aquae.*

[4] Abode of the Gods: Homer, *Odyss.*, VI, 43-45: οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε πότ' ὄμβρῳ / δεύεται οὔτε χιὼν ἐπιπίλναται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη / πέπταται ἀνέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη; adopted almost literally by Lucretius, *De rer. nat.*, III, 18-22, for the Epicurean gods. The same elements are found in Claudian's description of the mountain with the palace of Venus (see p. 325, n. 2) and in that of Sidonius of the region where Aurora's palace stands: *Carmina*, II, 407-417. Golden Age: Virgil, *Georgica*, II, 338-339: *ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat / orbis, et hibernis pascebant flatibus Euri; idem*, II, 149-150 (description of Italy with the features of the Golden Age, *cf.* W. Richter, *Vergil, Georgica*, (Das Wort der Antike, V), Munich, 1957, 206); Ovid, *Metam.*, I, 107. Abode of the Blessed: Homer, *Odyss.*, IV, 566-568: οὐ νιφετός, οὔτ' ἄρ χειμὼν πολὺς οὔτε πότ' ὄμβρος, / ἀλλὰ ἀεὶ Ζεφύροιο λιγὺ

do not prove that Lactantius could not have had Paradise in mind. As early an author as Flavius Josephus described the ideas of the Essenes about the hereafter in phrases clearly inspired by Homer: it was a country on the other side of the Ocean which did not suffer from heavy rains, blizzards, and summer heat but was always freshened by the soft Zephyr of the Ocean.[1] The idea that summer heat will be unknown in the abode of the pious seems highly appropriate for the Essenes. Second Isaiah had already posed this for those who were to return from the Babylonian captivity: "They shall neither hunger nor thirst; no scorching heat or sun shall distress them; for one who loves them shall lead them and take them to water at bubbling springs" (*Isa.* xlix.10), a theme taken over by John for the New Jerusalem (*Rev.* vii.16-17). The eternal spring characterized by the absence of storms, scorching heat, and winter cold is also found in the descriptions of Paradise given by Aphraates, Ephraem, Pseudo-Basil, Ambrose, Augustine, Prudentius, Marius Victor, Dracontius, Pseudo-Cyprianus, Avitus, and Isodore of Seville.[2] It is possible that the influence of *De ave phoenice* is to be detected in some of them, but it is in any case clear that Lactantius was not the first to include elements from the Classical traditions concerning the abode of the Blessed in the Christian image of Paradise.[3] After the

πνείοντος ἀήτας / 'Ωκεανὸς ἀνίησιν ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους. Pindar, *Olymp.*, II, 71-73; Pseudo-Plato, *Axiochus*, 371d; Horatius, *Epod.*, XVI, 53-56; Lucian, *Verae narr.*, II, 12. *Cf.* also Pliny, IV, 89, on the Hyperboreans: *regio aprica, felici temperie, omni adflatu noxio carens.*

[1] Josephus, *De bello Judaico*, II, 155: ... καὶ χῶρον οὔτε ὄμβροις οὔτε νιφετοῖς οὔτε καύμασι βαρυνόμενον, ἀλλ' ὃν ἐξ ὠκεανοῦ πραῢς ἀεὶ ζέφυρος ἐπιπνέων ἀναψύχει.

[2] Aphraates, *Demonstr.*, XXII, 12; Ephraem, *Hymni de paradiso*, X, 2-6, XI, 2; Pseudo-Basil, *Orat.*, III: *de paradiso*, 2 (*PG* 30, 64 BC); Ambrose, *De bono mortis*, 12, 53; Augustine, *De civit.*, XIV, 26; Prudentius, *Cath.*, III, 103; Marius Victor, *Alethia*, I, 228; Dracontius, *De laud. Dei*, I, 185, 189-193, 199; Pseudo-Cyprian, *Ad Flav. Fel. de resurrectione*, 240-244; Avitus, I, 222-226; Isidore, *Etym.*, XIV, 3, 2-3. In 4 *Ezra*, 7, 39-44, this theme has become a negation of all possible earthly circumstances; *cf.* 41: *neque aestatem, neque verem, neque aestum, neque hiemem.*

[3] As supposed by W. Ganzenmüller, *Das Naturgefühl im Mittelalter*, (Beitr. zur Kulturgesch. des Mitt. und der Renaiss., 18), Leipzig-Berlin, 1914, 16, whose view is adopted by Schippers, *Avitus*, 16, n. 4, and 93 (with the name misspelled: Galgenmüller). Patch, (see p. 300, n. 1), 137, sees a strong influence of *De ave phoenice* in Pseudo-Cyprian (see n. 2). Boas,

precedence Josephus assigns to the Essenes, we find a Christian identification of Elysium with Paradise as early as the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Oracula Sibyllina*.[1] Tertullian even derived from it evidence to support the truth of Christianity: since Paradise is the older of these two related conceptions, the pagan philosophers and poets must have drawn on the sacred beliefs of the Christians![2]

Lactantius' description of the fortunate conditions prevailing in the abode of the phoenix is also not free of Classical influence: in the grove of the sun there is no pale illness, sorrowful old age, cruel death, or raw fear; unutterable crime does not occur there, nor mad passion for money and killing; and bitter sorrow, ragged poverty, sleepless cares, and gnawing hunger are not known.[3] Here Lactantius gives a list of the physical and moral evils characerizing our world, for which a number of close parallels can be found in the Classical literature.[4] The Classical world was convinced that in the Golden Age, on the Isles of the Blessed, and among such peoples as the Hypoboreans, all these forms of human misery were unknown or occurred only to a much smaller degree.[5] But since this misery is

o.c., 157, too calls Lactantius' poem the first example of a description of Paradise into which the Classical ideas concerning the Golden Age are incporated.

[1] *Apocalypse of Peter*, Gr. *frg.* (ed. Wessely, *PO*, 18, 1924, 482): καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καλὸν βάπτισμα ἐν σωτηρίᾳ Ἀχερουσίας λίμνης ἣν καλοῦσιν ἐν τῷ Ἠλυσίῳ πεδίῳ, μέρος δικαιοσύνης μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων μου. *Oracula Sibyllina*, II 334-338: λεξάμενος γὰρ ἐσαῦθις ἀπὸ φλογὸς ἀκαμάτοιο / ἄλλοσ' ἀποστήσας πέμψει διὰ λαὸν ἑαυτοῦ / εἰς ζωὴν ἑτέραν καὶ αἰώνιον ἀθανάτοισιν / Ἠλυσίῳ πεδίῳ, ὅθι οἱ πέλε κύματα μακρά / λίμνης ἀενάου Ἀχερουσίαδος βαθυκόλπου.

[2] Tertullian, *Apolog.*, 47, 13-14, : *et si paradisum nominemus ... Elysii campi fidem occupaverunt* (according to the opponents). *Unde haec, oro vos, philosophis aut poetis tam consimilia? Non nisi de nostris sacramentis*!

[3] Lactantius, 15-20: *Non huc exsangues morbi, non aegra senectus, / nec mors crudelis nec metus asper adest, / nec scelus infandum nec opum vesana cupido / aut ira aut ardens caedis amore furor; / luctus acerbus abest et egestas obsita pannis / et curae insomnes et violenta fames.*

[4] See Fitzpatrick, 63-64; *cf.* e.g. Virgil, *Aeneis*, VI, 273-281, mentioning among others *luctus, curae, morbi, senectus, metus, fames, egestas, bellum, discordia.*

[5] Golden Age: Hesiod, *Erga*, 112-117: ὥστε θεοὶ δ' ἔζωον ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες / νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνων καὶ οἰζύος, οὔτε τι δειλὸν / γῆρας ἐπῆν, αἰεὶ δε πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὁμοῖοι / τέρποντ' ἐν θαλίησι, κακῶν ἐκτοσθεν ἁπάντων· / θνῆσκον δ' ὥσθ' ὕπνῳ δεδμημένοι· ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα / τοῖσιν ἔην; Aratus, *Phaenomena*,

universal among mankind, the longing for and the description of a world free of all these ills occurs outside the Classical world too. In India the Golden Age was drawn with the same features [1] and it does not diverge in the Iranian mythology: in the land of Yima there was no hunger and no thirst, no heat and no cold, no senility, death, or hatred.[2]

It would be extraordinary if these same themes did not return in the Jewish and Christian images of Paradise. According to Enoch, in the eschaton the elect will no longer know sorrow, plague, torment or calamity.[3] In the New Jerusalem, according to *Rev.* xxi. 4, there will be no kind of pain whatever: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes; there shall be an end to death, and to mourning and crying and pain; for the old order has passed away". Aphraates too expected that in the final Paradise desire and sensuality, wrath and insolence, hate and greed would be unknown and that only mutual love would burn in the hearts of the chosen.[4] According to Ephraem, in Paradise there is no labour, no hunger, and no sin, no care and no pain, no fear and no war.[5] This also held, according to the *Cave of Treasures*,

108-110; Ovid, *Metam.*, I, 89-91; Tibullus, *Eleg.*, I, 3, 47-48. Hyperboreans: Pindar, *Pyth.*, X, 41-44: νόσοι δ' οὔτε γῆρας οὐλόμενον κέκραται / ἱερᾷ γενεᾷ· πόνων δὲ καὶ μαχᾶν ἄτερ / οἰκέοισι φυγόντες ὑπέρδικον Νέμεσιν; Pliny, IV, 89. Gennaro, (see p. 312, n. 3), 348, compares Lactantius, 15-24, with Lucretius, *De rer. nat.*, II, 646-651, where the undisturbed rest of the Epicurean gods is described. Because he limited himself to comparing Lactantius and Lucretius, he did not see that parallels can be indicated in many other authors as well. He therefore mistakenly came to the conclusion that: "*l'ideale beatitudine e gli elementi della natura, più che essere ispitari alla S. Scrittura, sono trasfigurati nel loro aspetto polemico e poetico, e .. si accostano alla natura lucreziana*" (347-348).

[1] See the striking parallel in P. E. Dumont, *Primitivism in Indian literature*, in Lovejoy and Boas, (see p. 310, n. 1), 434.

[2] *Cf.* e.g. Zend Avesta, *Zamyad Yast*, VII, 32-33 (trans. Darmesteter, *SBE*, 23, 1883, 293) and *Yasna*, IX, 5 (trans. Mills, *SBE*, 31, 1887, 232); see also references given on p. 314, nn. 2-4.

[3] *Eth. Enoch*, 25, 6; see also *Rev.*, vii.16-17 and 4 *Ezra*, 7, 114.

[4] Aphraates, *Demonstr.* XXII, 12 (*PS* I, 1014/5): *Nulla illic invenietur naturalis cupiditas; ab omnibus voluptatibus procul habebuntur. Ira nec procacitas in corda eorum ascendent, et quaecumque peccatum pariunt ab eis tollentur. Fervescet in cordibus eorum mutuus amor, neque ullum omnino inter eos odium se intromittet ... Non illic avaritiae cupidine constringentur, nec recordatione in errorem inducentur.*

[5] Ephraem, *Hymni de paradiso*, VII, 11-13, 22-23.

for the holy tribe of Seth, which lived on the slopes of the Paradise mountain;[1] and of the mysterious people of the Camerini, who live in the land of Eden, it is said that the people are very good and pious and that they know none of the ills of the body or the soul.[2] In the poem by Pseudo-Cyprian on the resurrection, the absence of all earthly ills in Paradise is also emphasized: anger and deception and vicious lust are unknown there, fear and care are shut out, evil and affliction banished.[3] It is evident from these texts that the negation of all human misery was a fixed theme in the literature on Paradise, both the Paradise of Adam and Eve and the future one.[4]

[1] *Cave of Treasures*, 7, 5-11 (trans. Bezold, 10).

[2] Junior Philosophus, *Expos. totius mundi et gentium*, D.4: *isti autem homines sunt valde pii et boni, apud quos nulla malitia invenitur, neque corporis neque animi.*

[3] Pseudo-Cyprian, *Ad Flav. Fel. de resurrectione*, 246-249: *Iraeque insidiaeque absunt et dira cupido, / exclususque metus pulsaeque a limine curae. / Hinc malus extremas relegatur exul in oras, beatosque labor vetitus contingere fines.*

[4] Hubaux and Leroy failed to see the connection between the abode of the phoenix according to Lactantius and the Judaeo-Christian and Classical conceptions of Paradise. They attempted to demonstrate (p. 110-115) that Lactantius was inspired by the Essenes report in Pliny, V, 73. Their main arguments are: 1. This Jewish sect was called a *gens socia palmarum* by Pliny; cf. φοῖνιξ = phoenix and palm. 2. It lives *sine ulla femina, omne venere abdicata*; *cf.* Lactantius, 164: *Felix quae Veneris foedera nulla colit*; 3. Nonetheless: *Ita per saeculorum milia (incredibile dictu) gens aeterna est, in qua nemo nascitur; cf.* the lifespan of 1,000 years in Lactantius; 4. The emphasis on the absence of all evil in the abode of the phoenix is not really consistent with this bird (which is already happy by nature) but answers very well for a cenobitic community like that of the Essenes (of whom it is said that they rejected money and commerce, and that among them the difference between rich and poor or master and servant did not occur). In a later study: *Pline et les Esséniens*, in *Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, 5th Series, 44 ,Brussels, 1958, 475-495, Hubaux again attempted to demonstrate a close relationship between the legend of the phoenix and that of the Essenes, but assumed for this a more intensive interaction in the sense that in the description of the Essenes he saw a distinct influence of the traditions concerning the phoenix, "*symbole et modèle, semble-t-il, des Esséniens*" (p. 493). The points of agreement mentioned are rather superficial; to the extent that they are realistic it must be kept in mind that the Classical and Jewish traditions concerning life in the Golden Age and the like and in Paradise—both of the primeval period and of the eschaton— seem to have influenced the descriptions of the Essenes, who may themselves have contributed to this to the extent that they saw their way of life as a realization of the eschaton.

Lactantius assumes the same for the abode of the phoenix and does so in words strongly reminiscent of Classical examples, but this does not provide us with arguments against the hypothesis that he had the Christian paradise in mind.

The analysis of the material in Lactantius concerning the abode of the phoenix leads us to the conclusion that he was led by the Jewish and Christian traditions concerning Paradise, which played an especially strong part in the eschatological expectations of the Early Church. For a proper understanding of this point we must keep in mind the fact that even before his time the Christians had seen the parallelism between this Paradise and, for example, the Golden Age and the Elysium of the Classical world and made use of the relevant Classical ideas in their descriptions, at least whenever the Judaeo-Christian tradition offered an opportunity to do so. This tendency is very marked in Lactantius, and it would indeed be strange if this were not the case for this "Christian Cicero". For the chiliast Lactantius, too, we may certainly assume a knowledge of the popular Christian echatological expectations. These conclusions are of course important with respect to the interpretation of *De ave phoenice*.[1]

According to Claudian, too, the phoenix dwelt in a sacred grove near the place where the sun rises, but his description diverges so widely from that of Lactantius that there is little probability of dependence on *De ave phoenice*.[2] The grove lies beyond India and the East, the Ocean flows around it. In the morning it is the first place to receive the light of the sun rising from the Ocean: it shakes under the snorting steeds of the sun chariot, it hears near by the roaring crack of the whip, where the moist thresholds echo to the clanking of the still dripping chariot, the dawn breaks and the night flees before the flashing wheels.[3] We have already seen that according to certain

[1] See here, p. 382. According to a few Old-English and Old-Norse texts, too, the phoenix lives in Paradise; *cf.* H. Larsen, *Notes on the phoenix*, in *Journal of English and German philology*, 41, 1942, 79-84.

[2] This is assumed by e.g. Riese, *Ueber den Ph. des Lact.* 446 ff., Rapisarda, 76, and Walla, 135-136. The relationship between Lactantius and Claudian is difficult to determine; see reference in n. 3 on p. 158.

[3] Claudian, Phoenix, 1-6: *Oceani summo circumfluus aequore lucus / trans Indos Eurumque viret, qui primus anhelis / sollicitatur equis vicinaque verbera*

traditions a relation is also drawn between the death of the phoenix and the rising sun.[1] In this region, according to Claudian, the fortunate sun bird rules entirely alone and protected by the inaccessibility of the region. Its abode is free of sick animals and it does not have to suffer dire infection of the world of man. The bird is the equal of the gods; the duration of its life makes it the match of the stars, and it has eternal life because of its capacity to renew itself.[2]

From the foregoing it is not difficult to discern in Claudian the traditional description of the Isles of the Blessed. The phoenix lives on an island surrounded by the Ocean and crossed by the sea-winds from which, as we shall see, it takes its food.[3] Sicknesses are unknown in its region, because there are no animals to carry them.[4] By "the dire infection of the world of man" Claudian probably meant the moral and physical ills dealt with in such detail by Lactantius rather than that man might endanger its life and safety.[5] Thus the phoenix of Claudian too enjoys the perfect life perpetually sought and never found by man on earth. We shall see that Claudian's poem was inspired by the popular Stoic-Eclectic philosophy,[6] and that it is probable that his phoenix was a symbol of "redeemed" man, i.e. the soul freed of this earthly life.

Only when the theme of the care-free, perfect life of the phoenix had become detached from its abode in Paradise, in the Classical as well as the Christian sense, could the meaning of this theme become

sentit, / umida roranti resonant cum limina curru, / unde rubet ventura dies longeque coruscis / nox adflata rotis refugo pallescit amictu.

[1] See p. 203, 205, and 206. According to Sidonius, *Carmina*, II, 416-417, the phoenix brings the cinnamon for its funeral pyre from the region where Aurora's palace stands, in the vicinity of which it lives.

[2] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 7-12: *Haec fortunatus nimium Titanius ales / regna colit solusque plaga defensus iniqua / possidet intactas aegris animalibus oras / saeva nec humani patitur contagia mundi. / Par volucer superis, stellas qui vividus aequat / durando membrisque terit redeuntibus aevum.*

[3] For the refreshing sea-wind (zephyr), see texts mentioned in n. 4 on p. 327, under Abode of the Blessed, from Homer, Pindar, Lucian; see also Josephus, on p. 328, in n. 1. For the food, *cf.* p. 336.

[4] *Cf.* Ovid, *Amores*, II, 6, 52 (cited p. 310, n. 3) and Horatius, *Epod.*, XVI, 50, on the Isles of the Blessed: *nulla nocent pecori contagia.* See also here, p. 183, on the circumstances in the abode where according to Lactantius the phoenix renews itself.

[5] As in Hubaux and Leroy, 113-114.

[6] See p. 338-340.

reduced to the bare fact that man could not pursue it. We find this in Dionysius of Philadelphia: the phoenix lives the longest of all birds and completely without fear, because ill-disposed men cannot harm it with bows, or with stones, or with lime-twigs, or with nets.[1]

[1] Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32: καὶ βιοῦν φασιν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον καὶ μετὰ πάσης ἀφοβίας αὐτόν, ὡς οὔτε τόξοις, οὔτε λίθοις, οὔτε καλάμοις ἢ πάγαις τῶν ἀνδρῶν τε κατ᾿ αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν πειρωμένων.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FOOD

The mortality of all earthly beings is expressed in their recurrent need for food, but the immortality of the phoenix is accentuated by its food. Only a few authors consider the food of the phoenix. Manilius says that no man has yet seen the phoenix eat.[1] The meaning of this statement may be that the bird probably never eats or that if it does so its food cannot be of an earthly nature. According to the descriptions, the latter is indeed the case.

Ovid was of the opinion that the phoenix lived on aromatics: "Not from fruits or herbs does it live, but from drops of frankincense and juice of *amomum*".[2] Aromatics are a miraculous food, they break the power of death: according to Pausanias, the poison of the snakes living under the balsam tree is not injurious because they eat of this most fragrant of spices.[3] We have already seen that aromatics play a major part at the death and resurrection of the phoenix; for the latter they form an obligatory condition and symbolize the victory of life over death.[4] Ovid says that the bird is also dependent on aromatics for the continuation of its life. Thus, there is a distinct parallelism between the food of the phoenix and its death and revival; these are two aspects of the same thing: the aromatics guarantee it immortality.

A complete identification of the fragrant food of the phoenix and

[1] Pliny, X, 4: *neminem extitisse qui viderit vescentem.*

[2] Ovid. *Metam.*, XV, 393-394: *non fruge neque herbis, / sed turis lacrimis et suco vivit amomi.* Followed by Dante, *Inferno*, XXIV, 109-110: *Erba nè badio in sua vita non pasce ,/ ma sol d'incenso lagrime ed amomo.* Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De prop. rerum*, XII, 14, retains the food rejected by Ovid, albeit with the qualification that it is "pure": *granis et fructibus mundis cibum querens.*

[3] Pausanias, IX, 28, 4: ἅτε γὰρ σιτουμένοις τοῖς ἔχεσι μύρων τὸ εὐοσμότατον, μετακεράννυταί σφισιν ἐκ τοῦ θανατώδους ἐς τὸ ἠπιώτερον ὁ ἰός. This text is cited and discussed by M. Laurent, *Le phénix, les serpents et les aromates dans une miniature du XIIe siècle*, in *AC*, 4, 1934, 382.

[4] See here, p. 169-171.

the perfumes it collects before its death is found in John of Gaza: in preparation for its death "it feeds abundantly on fragrant meadows, eating of a fragrant flower".[1] This line is immediately followed by the story of its death; the collection of aromatics has disappeared. Like its periodic death, the food of the phoenix has become the sign of its essential immortality.

The other reports on the food of the phoenix are determined even more strongly than the foregoing by the symbolic meaning given to the bird. For a systematic treatment of this material we can best start with the data in the *Phoenix* of Claudian. Although related ideas occur in earlier writers, only Claudian's report can be explained exclusively on the basis of Classical conceptions.

Claudian too emphasizes the fact that the phoenix does not eat ordinary earthly food: "The bird is not accustomed to satisfy its hunger with food, or stave off its thirst at any spring, but the purer heat of the sun feeds it and it drinks the windy nutriments of Tetys, taking nourishment from the innocuous vapours".[2] So Claudian has the rays of the sun serve as the food and the sea mists as the sustaining drink of the phoenix.

To start with the last of these points, the idea that a fresh breeze can give health and life was not unknown in the Classical world,[3] although everyone knew that it is impossible for human beings to "live on air".[4] However, this form of nutrition was assumed for a few species of animals thought to be unable to feed in the normal manner. Ovid and Pliny report that the chameleon, which was con-

[1] John of Gaza, II, 214-215: γαστέρα πιαλέην εὐώδεσι θήκατο ποίαις, / ἄνθεος εὐόδμου βοτανηφάγος.

[2] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 13-16: *Non epulis saturare famem, non fontibus ullis / adsuetus prohibere sitem; sed purior illum / Solis fervor alit ventosaque pabula potat / Tethyos, innocui carpens alimenta vaporis.* The great Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel seems to have been inspired by Claudian in his *Joseph in Dothan* (1640), l. 1155ff.: "*Aldus, gevoedt van hemelsch vier / en zon en daeuw, bereickt mijn dier / zoo menige eeuw van hondert jaer*".

[3] E.g. Plato, *Rep.*, 401c: αὔρα φέρουσα ἀπὸ χρηστῶν τόπων ὑγίειαν. Philo, *De vitibus*, 93: καὶ μαλακὰς δρόσους, ζωτικώτατας αὔρας.

[4] E.g. Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, 1158-1162: ἀπὸ γὰρ βίον αὐτίκα λείψω. / πόθεν γὰρ ἔσται βιοτά; τίς ὧδ᾽ ἐν αὔραις τρέφεται, / μηκέτι μηδενὸς κρατύνων ὅσα πέμπει βιόδωρος / αἶα; Athenaeus, *Deipnos.*, II, 47c: οὖ ῥᾷστ᾽ ἀεὶ πεινῶσι Κεκροπιδῶν κόροι / κάπτοντες αὔρας, ἐλπίδας σιτούμενοι; see also *idem*: IX, 405 d.

sidered to be filled with air, feeds itself with substances taken from the air, supplied to it by the wind.[1] According to a report made by Ctesias in Plutarch, a bird was known in Persia that passed no dung but whose insides were full of fat; this led the Persians to conclude that it fed on wind and dew.[2] A similar assumption is made in Eusebius for the young raven spoken of in *Ps.* cxlvii (*LXX*: cxlvi).9: they are fed with "a certain food from the air driven into their mouth by a gentle breeze", and this is repeated at the beginning of the twelfth century by Euthymius Zigabenus.[3] The idea that the winds bring food is also found in Lucian's caricature of the Isle of the Blessed: at the banquet of the fortunate held in the Elysian Fields, the winds serve up everything except the drinks.[4] Remarkably enough, we find the same assumed for Paradise in Ephraem the Syrian; there, the winds wait on the just, one providing satiation, the other drink.[5] In addition to the popular vision of a kind of Cockaigne, Ephraem also knew a very spiritual concept of Paradise.[6]

[1] Pliny, VIII, 122: *ipse celsus hianti semper ore solus animalium nec cibo nec potu alitur nec alio quam aeris alimento;* Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 411: *id quoque, quod ventis animal nutritur et aura.* For Classical views on the chameleon, see O. Keller, *Die Antike Tierwelt*, II, Leipzig, 1913 281-284.

[2] Plutarch, *Vita Artax.*, 19, 4 (ed. Lindeskog-Ziegler, *Vitae*, III, 1, 388): γίνεται δὲ μικρὸν ἐν Πέρσαις ὀρνίθιον, ᾧ περιττώματος οὐδέν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὅλον διαπλέων πιμελῆς τὰ εντός, ᾗ καὶ νομίζουσιν ἀνέμῳ καὶ δρόσῳ τρέφεσθαι τὸ ζῷον· ὀνομάζεται δὲ ῥυντάκης. See also p. 351, n. 1.

[3] Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos, ad* cxlvi.9 (*PG* 24, 68C): τρέφεσθαι δὲ ἄλλῳ παραδόξῳ τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμει ... οὕτω δὲ φέρεσθαι αὐτοῖς· τινα ἐξ ἀέρος τροφὴν κατὰ τοῦ στόματος ὑπὸ τινος αὔρας συνωθουμένην; Euthymius Zigabenus, *Comm. in Psalmos, ad* cxlvi.9 (*PG* 128, 1304 D): οὓς ὁ θεὸς ἀπορρήτως τρέφει ... αὔρας τοῖς στόμασιν αὐτῶν ἐμπιπτούσης, βρῶσιν ἐξ ἀέρος τινα ἐπισπωμένοις. For the young raven, see also p. 352-354.

[4] Lucian, *Verae narrat.*, II, 14: διακονοῦνται δὲ καὶ παραφέρουσιν ἕκαστα οἱ ἄνεμοι πλήν γε τοῦ οἰνοχοεῖν.

[5] Ephraem, *Hymni de paradiso*, IX, 8 (trans. E. Beck, CSCO 175, Scr. Syri 79, Louvain, 1957, 35): "*Winde sind es, die im Paradies zu den Gerechten eilen; / der eine haucht Sättigung, der andre spendet Trank. / Der Hauch des einen ist üppig, das Wehen des andern saftvoll. / Wer sah (je) Winde, die mit sich führten / Lüfte zu essen und andre zu trinken*". In both Lucian and Ephraem the blessed lie on a bed of flowers under fruit-bearing trees; both also mention the bathing in dew. *Cf.* also the description of the blessed in Paradise in Prudentius, *Hamartigenia*, 856-858: *Illic, purpureo latus exporrecta cubili, / floribus aeternis spirantes libat odores, / ambrosiumque bibit roseo de stramine rorem.*

[6] See texts cited on p. 356, in nn. 2 and 3.

That Claudian drew on an existing tradition in having the phoenix fed by vapours rising from the sea and carried by the wind is made probable by the report of the *Physiologus of Vienna* that the new-born phoenix, still only a feathered worm, flies to the edge of the sea, lives there, and is maintained by "the water and the dry".[1]

We have already seen that Claudian's picture of the perfect abode of the phoenix is in agreement with the traditional descriptions of the Isles of the Blessed: it lives on an island washed by the ocean and swept by the sea-winds, free of all the sorrows that make life so difficult in our world.[2] A quite different concept of the Isles of the Blessed or the Elysian Fields was taught by the Pythagoreans: these exquisite abodes were located on the sun and moon.[3] These ideas seem to have become known to the Stoics and Eclectics, especially via Posidonius, albeit modified in the sense that the Elysian Fields were no longer placed on the moon but around it.[4] According to Stoic doctrine, the souls rising from the earth or descending from the sun are arrested when they reach the sphere of the moon because the lightness of its ether accords completely with their own weight. There, according to Cicero, they lack for nothing and are fed and sustained with the same food that the stars are sustained and fed with.[5] According to Plutarch, this is the vapour present there,[6] and

[1] *Physiologus of Vienna*, 26-28: καὶ εἶθ᾿ οὕτως τῇ προνοίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ πέτασθαι τὸν σκώληκα ἐκεῖνον, ... καὶ πλησίον γίνεσθαι τῆς ὄχθης τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ, καὶ ζῆν αὐτὸν καὶ οἰκονομεῖσθαι ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τῆς ξηρᾶς.

[2] See p. 332-333, and the references given there; also O. Waser, *Elysion*, in *RE*, 5, 2, 1905, 2470-2476.

[3] Jamblichus, *Vita Pythag.*, XVIII, 82 (*FVS*, I, 464, 6): Τί ἐστιν αἱ μακάρων νῆσοι; ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη. For this, see Detienne, *La notion de DAÏMÔN*, 105.

[4] See Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, 146, 175-182, 399-400, most of which is also found in his earlier books: *After life*, 96-100, also 29 and 161, and in *Symbolisme funéraire*, 167, 183ff, 188, 192ff. See also Nilsson, *Gesch. der gr. Religion*, II, 471-477. For the influence of Posidonius and the later effect of these conceptions on Christian authors, see E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro. Aeneis Buch VI*, Leipzig, 1903, 23-29.

[5] Cicero, *Tusc. disput.*, I, 43: *in quo nulla re egens aletur (sc. animus) et sustentabitur isdem rebus, quibus astra sustentantur et aluntur*. For the eclectic character of Cicero's views: K. Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie. Neue Untersuchungen über Poseidonius*, Munich, 1926, 363.

[6] Plutarch, *De facie in orbe lunae*, 28 (*ed.* Pohlenz, *Moralia*, V, 3, 84): καὶ γίνεται σταθερὸν καὶ διαυγές, ὥσθ᾿ ὑπὸ τῆς τυχούσης ἀναθυμιάσεως τρέφεσθαι.

Sextus Empiricus completes the picture when he says that this is the vapour that rises from the earth and is used by the souls as a suitable food, "just like the other stars".[1] Lucian, who could not resist ridiculing these ideas in his *Verae narrationes*, tells how the inhabitants of the moon use as food the ascending smoke from burnt frogs and take their beverages from the air, which is pressed in a cup and releases a fluid like dew.[2] It is quite clear from these texts of Cicero and Sextus Empiricus that the pure souls in the sphere of the moon are equated with the stars, even as far as their food is concerned. The idea that the stars, the moon, and the sun are fed by a vapour that rises from the earth and the ocean was a well-known doctrine of the Stoics, who seem to have borrowed it from Heraclitus.[3] On the other hand, the blaze of the sun, which warms the entire cosmos, was considered to be the procreator and maintainer of life.[4] Particularly in the region of the moon, a mixing of the moist vapour of the earth and the rays of the sun was supposed to take place.[5]

We cannot help receiving the impression that in his description of the fortunate circumstances and the food of the phoenix, Claudian had in mind this popular-philosophical concept of the Elysian Fields: the bird leads the same life as the gods and the stars,[6] like the blessed

Full discussion of Plutarch's ideas in Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie*, 313-353, especially 337ff.

[1] Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mathemat.*, IX, 73 (*ed.* Mutschmann, II, 231): τροφῇ δὲ χρῶνται οἰκείᾳ τῇ ἀπὸ γῆς ἀναθυμιάσει ὡς τὰ λοιπὰ ἄστρα. This text concerns the souls that descend to earth from the sun via the moon; see Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie*, 308-311.

[2] Lucian, *Verae narrat.*, I, 23: ποτὸν δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐστιν ἀὴρ ἀποθλιβόμενος εἰς κύλικα καὶ ὕγρον ἀνιεὶς ὥσπερ δρόσον.

[3] See texts in J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, II, Leipzig, 1903, nos. 650, 652, 655, 656, 658 (p. 196), nos. 659-663 (p. 197), no. 677 (p. 199); for Heraclitus see no. 690 (p. 201): Ἡράκλειτος καὶ οἱ Στόϊκοι τρέφεσθαι τοὺς ἀστέρας ἐκ τῆς ἐπιγείου ἀναθυμιάσεως (Aëtius, *Plac. Phil.* II, 17, 4). *Cf.* Reinhardt's study mentioned above, and also M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*, Göttingen, I, 1948, 81-82, 219 and II, 1949, 48.

[4] Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, I, 83 (Cleanthes), 219, 223-224, 229 (Posidonius), Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie*, 351.

[5] Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie*, 338-353, 403-410 and Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, I, 81-82, 217 and II, 111.

[6] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 11, see p. 333, n. 2.

pure souls it is fed by the salubrious vapour from the air and the blaze of the sun, which is "purer" than in our world. If this assumption is correct, Claudian must here, with truly poetic power, have combined the mythological and the philosophical ideas of the abode of the Blessed, on the basis of an existing tradition concerning the feeding of the young phoenix with moisture and the warmth of the sun.

The idea that the phoenix feeds itself with food from the air also occurs in the Hellenistic-Jewish and Christian literature. The nourishing substances there are dew and manna. We have just seen that Lucian assumed that the inhabitants of the moon drank dew that was pressed from the air.[1] In his *Icaromenippus*, the supreme food on the moon is dew.[2] In the texts to be discussed below, however, not only manna but also dew can be explained entirely from the Judaeo-Christian world of ideas. According to the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, the phoenix eats "the manna of heaven and the dew of earth",[3] and the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* reports that the bird feeds itself on "the dew of heaven and the flowers of the trees of Lebanon".[4] Because the dew and the manna require the most thorough discussion, we shall begin with the flowers of the trees of Lebanon.

The passage on the food of the phoenix in the Coptic sermon reads as follows: "Just as the bee eats from the flowers of the field which are wax to it, and from the dew of heaven which is honey to it, so too the phoenix lives on the dew of heaven and the flowers of the trees of Lebanon". It was indeed believed that the bee took its wax from flowers and its honey from dew.[5] Like John of Gaza, this Coptic preacher too assumes that the phoenix feeds on flowers, but here we must think of the flowers of the cedar tree.[6] We have already dem-

[1] See p. 339, n. 2.

[2] Lucian, *Icaromenippus*, 13: καὶ νῦν ἐν τῇ σελήνῃ κατοικῶ ἀεροβατῶν τὰ πολλὰ καὶ σιτοῦμαι δρόσον.

[3] *Gr. Apocalypse of Baruch*, 6, 11: καὶ εἶπον· καὶ τί ἐσθίει; καὶ εἶπέν μοι· τὸ μάννα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὴν δρόσον τῆς γῆς.

[4] Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, 28-32.

[5] For the honey, see F. Olck, *Biene*, in *RE*, 3, 1899, 438-439; for the wax, *idem*, 440.

[6] See p. 336.

onstrated that the mention of Lebanon must have been taken from the Physiologus.[1]

In the preceding chapter we saw that Lebanon and the cedar were favourite images in Biblical eschatological thinking,[2] and that this had its effect on Christianity. According to the Old Testament directions for the ritual purification of someone who had been a leper or had touched a dead body, cedarwood had to be used during the ritual: the imperishable wood rendered powerless and harmless the death with which the individual had been in contact.[3] Cyril of Alexandria saw this cedarwood as a foretoken of the flesh of Christ, which did not know decay, and an intimation of the ultimate immortality in store for the Christian.[4] The phoenix, feeding on the flowers of the trees of Lebanaon, evokes the picture of an eternal life such as mankind shall know in the eschatological glory of the Kingdom of God.

This is expressed even more clearly in the second kind of food assigned to the phoenix by the Coptic *Sermon on Mary*, and the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* too, the dew. The Jews, and via them the early Christians, saw dew as a special gift of God, dispelling death and nourishing life. This idea is ultimately determined by the geographical and climatological conditions under which the ancient Israelites lived; in the dry Palestinian region life would be impossible without dew. This is why the dew is mentioned in several Old Testament benedictions as one of God's special gifts of grace,[5] and conversely that the absence of dew was taken as one of God's forms of punishment.[6] In Hosea, for instance, dew is an image of God's

[1] See p. 307.

[2] See p. 308-309.

[3] *Lev.* xiv.4, 49ff.; *Num.* xix.6. On the cedar and its symbolism: D. Forstner, *Die Welt der Symbole*, 246-249.

[4] Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyrorum in Lev. liber*, (*PG* 69, 560 C): τύπος δ' ἂν εἴη καὶ τόδε τῆς ἁγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκός, οὐκ ἀνεχομένης παθεῖν τὴν καταφθοράν. ῎Ασηπτον γάρ τὸ ξύλον; *idem, Glaph. in Num.*, (*PG* 69, 631 C): τοῦ μὲν κεδρίνου, τῆν ἀφθαρσίαν ἀστείως ἡμῖν ὑπεμφαίνοντος· σήψεως γὰρ ἀμείνων ἡ κέδρος. *cf.* for these texts Forstner, *Welt der Symbole*, 249.

[5] E.g. *Gen.* xxvii.28 (Isaac to Jacob) and *Deut.* xxxiii.13 (Moses on the tribe of Joseph).

[6] E.g. 1 *Kings* xvii.1; *Haggai*, i. 10; *cf.* also *Gen.* xxvii.39 (Isaac to Esau) with xxvii. 28.

approval of his people: "I will be as dew to Israel" (*Hosea* xiv.5). From this it required only a small step to assume that the dead would be revived by the dew. This idea was later found clearly expressed in *Isaiah* (xxvi.19), although in this text revival by dew may only be an image of the lifting of the people from their abasement:[1] "They that sleep in the earth will awake and shout for joy; for thy dew is a dew of sparkling light,[2] and the earth will bring those long dead to birth again".

These ideas persisted in later Judaism and Early Christianity. The dew was considered on the one hand as the means by which God protected his chosen from death or revived them after death and on the other as an eschatological gift, the food of immortality, more emphasis being put in the latter case on the fact that honey is contained in the dew. But these two ideas are very closely related, because when someone is temporarily saved from death by the divine dew, an eschatological event has actually taken place.[3] It is not difficult to demonstrate these ideas concerning dew on the basis of several examples.[4]

According to the Septuagintal additions to the *Book of Daniel*, the three men were delivered from the fiery furnace because the Angel of the Lord accompanied them into the fire and raised a dew-laden wind in the oven.[5] In 3 *Macc.* 6, 6, the priest Eleazar makes a prayer for deliverance in which he includes these three among his examples of divine intervention [6] and explicitly states that they were saved

[1] See M. A. Beek, *Inleiding tot de Joodse apocalyptiek van het oud- en nieuwtestamentisch tijdvak*, (Theologia VI), Haarlem, 1950, 129, n. 8; Y. Kaufmann, *The religion of Israel*, Chicago, 1960, 384-385, and D. B. Eerdmans, *De godsdienst van Israël*, II, Huis ter Heide, 1930, 47-48.

[2] *Vulg.: Quia ros lucis ros tuus.* The LXX (ἡ γὰρ δρόσος ἡ παρὰ σοῦ ἴαμα αὐτοῖς ἐστιν) seem to have read אֲרוּכָה (healing), *cf.* K. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*, Tübingen, 1900, 195 and W. Gesenius-F. Buhl, *Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17th ed., Tübingen, 1949, 19, *s.v.* I. אוֹרָה.

[3] See e.g. subsequent remarks on Asenath and Mary.

[4] For the Jewish conceptions a great many examples are found in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, V, 11, n. 22, 119, n. 113 and *passim*; see also his register *s.v.* Dew.

[5] *Dan.* iii.50: καὶ ἐποίησε τὸ μέσον τῆς καμίνου ὡσεὶ πνεῦμα δρόσου.

[6] Mention is made of the crossing of the Red Sea, the liberation from Sennacherib, the three boys, Daniel in the lion's den, and Jonah in the whale. Here, the Jewish background of the great themes of Early Christian art is very evident.

because dew had wet the fiery oven.[1] The same kind of divine intervention occurred at the martyrdom of Montanus, Lucius, and several others: "The flame was put out by the dew of the Lord", they said later, and themselves pointed out the parallelism with the story in Daniel.[2] The partiality for the theme of the dew that extinguishes the consuming flames was so great that it was carried over from martyrology to hagiography.[3]

The idea that the dead could be revived by dew was primarily a rabbinical doctrine. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi taught, for instance, that when God handed down the law on Mt Sinai the Israelites died at each word, since it is written that: "...my soul went forth when he spake..." (*Song of S.* v.6). Upon the question how they could hear the second word if they had died at the sound of the first, he replied: "He brought down the dew with which He will resurrect the dead and revived them, as it is said: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, Thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary" (*Ps.* lxviii.10)".[4] And again, according to the rabbis, the dry bones Ezekiel saw in the valley came together and took on flesh after the dew of the Lord fell on them.[5]

The dew that according to Isaiah (xxvi.19) revives the dead, was taken by some commentators of the Early Church as referring to Christ, by others as to the Holy Ghost.[6] When they read in the Old

[1] 3 *Macc.* 6, 6: ... διάπυρον δροσίσας κάμινον. Something similar is found in the rabbinical literature, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, IV, 329, VI, 417-418; Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 738.

[2] *Mart. Montani et Lucii*, 3, 3-4 (ed. R. Knopf-G. Krüger, *Ausgewählte Märtyrerakten*, 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1929, 74): *et flamma caminorum ardentium dominico rore sopita est; ... qui gloriam istam operatus est in tribus pueris, vincebat et in nobis*. In the Coptic martyrdom of St. Victor, the flames into which the saint was thrown are turned into dew by Michael. See A. E. W. Budge, *Coptic martyrdoms*, London, 1914, 24 (text), 276 (trans.); see also J. Zandee, *Het patroon der martyria*, in *Ned. Theol. Tijdschr.*, 14, 1959/60, 20-21, and *Acta Philippi*, 104: σὺ εἶ ὁ δροσίζων πᾶσαν πυράν.

[3] E.g. Sulpicius Severus, *Epist.*, I, 15, and *Dialogus*, I, 18.

[4] *Shabbat*, 88b (trans. I. Epstein, *Shabbat*, II, London, 1938, 421). Also in W. G. Braude, *The midrash on Psalms*, I, New Haven, 1959, 540 (*ad Ps.* lxviii.10).

[5] Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, IV, 333, Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 740.

[6] To Christ: Eusebius of Caesarea, *Comm. in Isaiam*, (*PG* 24, 277 B), Theodoret of Cyrus, *In Isaiam*, (*PG* 81, 369 A). To the Holy Ghost:

Testament about a dew or rain descending from the heavens, they preferentially applied this to the coming of the divine *Logos*.[1] The mysterious dew of light about which Isaiah had spoken, took on great importance among the Gnostic sect of the Ophites, who according to Irenaeus were of the opinion that the divine spark of light caught in matter at the fall of Sophia had consisted of light-dew.[2] Noah and his family were saved from the Flood because they possessed it.[3] When Christ descended through the seven heavens, all the light-dew contained in them flowed out into him.[4] United with Sophia, Christ revealed himself on earth in the righteous man Jesus and thus brought about redemption: the completion would occur when all the light-dew was again collected together.[5] In this view all the elements of the Judaeo-Christian concept occur in a Gnostic distortion: the dew comes from God, it protects against death, Christ is the revelation of this life-giving dew.

The foregoing elucidates clearly how dew, as the food of the phoenix, could be taken by both Jew and Christian as a death-repelling

Procopius of Gaza, *Comm. in Isaiam*, (*PG* 87, 2228 B) and Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. in Isaiam*, (*PG* 70, 588 C-589 A). Jerome saw the dew as the *misericordia* of God: *Comm. in Isaiam*, lib. VIII, (*PL* 24, 303 C). Prudentius, *Cathemer.*, VI, 127, calls baptism *rorem sanctum*.

[1] As in the rabbinical exegesis (see above), little distinction was made in the Christian exegesis between dew and rain: the Fathers explained the rain said in *Ps.* lxxi.6 (LXX) to fall on a fleece as an image of the inconspicuousness of the incarnation of the *Logos* of God (e.g. Eusebius, (*PG* 23, 800 B-D), Athanasius, (*PG* 27, 324 D), Theodoret of Cyrus, (*PG* 80, 1433 A). This text had already been related by Origen, *In lib. Jud. homiliae*, VIII, 8 to Gideon's dew miracle (*Judges* vi.36-40), in which he saw the coming of Christ first to the Jews and then to the pagans; similarly in Augustine, *Enarratio in Ps.* xlv, *ad* vs. 7 (*PL* 36, 520-521). Under the influence of Mariology, attention shifted from the dew to the fleece mentioned in both texts, until in the Middel Ages *Vellus Gedeonis* became an accepted indication for Mary (occurring as early as in Proclus of Constantinople, *Orat.*, I and VI, (*PG* 65, 681 B, 756 C-D).

[2] Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses*, I, 30. Extensively reproduced in H. Leisegang, *Die Gnosis*, 4th ed., Stuttgart, 1955, 174-183; see also E. Preuschen, *Die Apokryphen gnostischen Adamschriften aus dem armenischen übersetzt und, untersucht*, Giessen, 1900, 62-73. For the possible background of these conceptions in Jewish gnosticism, see G. Quispel, *Der gnostische Anthropos und die jüdische Tradition*, in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 22, 1953, 202.

[3] Irenaeus, I, 30, 10.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 30, 12.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, 30, 14: *quando tota humectatio spiritus luminis colligatur*.

and life-giving power of God. But we can go even further. In the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* the phoenix is compared with the bee on this point too: the phoenix feeds on the dew, like the bee which takes its honey from it. We may conclude from this that the dew on which the phoenix fed also meant the honey contained in it.[1] This also holds for several apocryphal texts in which the dew is spoken of as the gift of the eschaton, which is expressed most clearly in a prediction of the Jewish Sibyl that when that time comes "a delicious draught of sweet honey" will fall from heaven.[2] So the phoenix eats the food of the eschaton! This also holds, however, for manna, which the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* also mentions as food of the phoenix and which was considered to be closely related to dew.

This relationship is indicated in the very first mention of manna in the Old Testament: manna fell together with the dew.[3] Another point of agreement is that both are closely related to honey: dew was generally considered to contain honey, and according to *Exodus* xvi. 31, the taste of manna was "like a wafer made with honey".[4] In the Jewish *Oracula Sibyllina*, manna is called "sweet bread from the starry sky", and Philo, who interprets it as divine wisdom, states that it is sweeter than honey.[5] In one of his poems Asaf

[1] See p. 340, n. 5. Honey could be called dew, *cf.*, Liddell-Scott, 450, s.v. δρόσος. The same identification but reserved occurs in the Copt Shenoute of Atripe, *Ad philosophum gentilem*, (ed. Leipoldt-Crum, *CSCO* 42, Scr. Copt., Ser. II, 4, 46): "*The bee is correctly loved by man, because it collects sweet honey that the Lord has caused to come down from heaven*".

[2] *Oracula Sibyllina*, III, 746: αὐτὰρ ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν μέλιτος γλυκεροῦ ποτὸν ἡδυ.

[3] *Exod.* xvi.13-14; *Num.* xi.9. For a discussion of most of the texts cited in this connection see P. Borgen, *Bread from heaven*, (Suppl. to *Novum Testamentum*, X), Leiden, 1965, and B. J. Malina, *The Palestinian manna tradition*, (Arb. zur Gesch. des spät. Judent. und des Urchrist., VII), Leiden, 1968.

[4] Philo, *De vita Mosis*, II, 258: Καρπὸν αἰθέριον ἐν δρόσῳ. Philo assumes the same relationship between dew and manna in his elucidation of manna as the *Logos* of God: *Leg. Allegor.*, III, 169: ὁρᾷς τῆς ψυχῆς τροφὴν οἵα ἐστι· Λόγος θεοῦ συνεχής, ἐοικὼς δρόσῳ, κύκλῳ πᾶσαν περιειληφὼς καὶ μηδὲν μέρος ἀμέτοχον αὑτοῦ ἐῶν.

[5] For Sibyl, see p. 347, n. 5. Philo, *De fuga et inventione*, 138: μέλιτος γλυκύτερον; *idem*, *Quis rer. div. heres*, 191: τὴν οὐράνιον τροφὴν—σοφία δέ ἐστιν—τῆς ψυχῆς, ἣν καλεῖ μάννα. In *Quod deter. pot. insidiari soleat*,

called manna "bread of the angels", which marked the formulation of a concept that was to have a rich history.[1] The idea that manna is the food of the angels returns in the later Jewish and Christian literature, although it was often contested by both Jewish and Christian theologians on the grounds that by nature angels did not require food.[2] In Christian exegesis the bread of the angels became the spiritual Christ that believers may taste,[3] and thus *panis angelorum* became a common indication for the bread of the Eucharist.[4]

The variability of the borderline between the honey made from heavenly dew and manna, is shown by the remarkable passage on the angels' food in the story of *Joseph and Asenath*, Ch. 16: Asenath receives from an angel a honeycomb made by the bees of the heavenly Paradise. The honey of such combs is the food of the angels: he who eats of it will never die.[5] It is evident that the writer of this symbolic story would not have seen much difference between this food and manna, which is sweet as honey.

The food of immortality is tasted by earthly mortals only as a great exception and by God's special grace; then, it is in fact a realization of the eschaton. This holds in Asenath's case and is also clearly expressed in the Early Christian tradition that during Mary's

117-118, he compares wisdom with sweet honey and combines manna with honey, see W. Michaëlis, art. μέλι, in *ThWNT*, IV, 1942, 557-558. *Cf.* also *Sirach*, 24, 3, where Wisdom says of herself: καὶ ὡς ὁμίχλη κατεκάλυψα γῆν.

[1] *Ps.* lxxvii.25: καὶ ἄρτον οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς· ἄρτον ἀγγέλων ἔφαγεν ἄνθρωπος. In Hebrew the text reads literally "bread of the mighty".

[2] On the food of the angels: G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the first centuries of the Tannaim*, I, 7th impr., Cambridge, 1954, 405; Bousset and Gressmann, 321; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, V, 236, VI, 17, and especially J. Michl, *Engel*, in *RAC*, V, 68, 85, 123-124.

[3] E.g. Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos, ad* lxxvii.25 (*PG* 12, 1541 C), Eusebius, *Comm. in Psalmos, ad* lxxvii.25 (*PG* 23, 917 D-920 A).

[4] The Biblical starting-point for this lies in *John*, vi.31ff, see also 1 *Cor.* x.3 and 4. Many Early Christian texts are cited by J Solano, *Textos eucharisticos primitivos*, I, II (Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 88 and 118), Madrid, 1952-1954, see II, 988: *Indice escrituristico, ad Ps.* lxxvii.24s and 25.

[5] *Joseph et Aseneth*, 16, 8 (ed. M. Philonenko, Leiden, 1968, 187): διότι τὸ μέλι τοῦτο πεποιήκασιν αἱ μέλισσαι τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ αὐτοῦ ἐσθίουσι, καὶ πᾶς ὃς φάγεται ἐξ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἀποθανεῖται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. In the longer text in P. Batiffol, *Studia patristica*, 1 and 2, Paris, 1889-1890, 64 it is said that the heavenly bees make the honeycomb from the dew of heavenly roses and other flowers of Paradise; this food is called the "*bread of Life*".

presumed stay in the temple she was fed by the angels.[1] In the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* it is said that "She never has eaten anything which was soiled and of this world, but she ate the food of the angels".[2] A related, also Coptic, apocryphal text says that the food was brought to her from heaven by the angels of God, and that they also brought her the fruit of the Tree of Life to eat with joy.[3] Here Mary enjoys in advance the gifts of the eschaton; this was a preferred apocalytic theme: in eschatological times the righteous will again have access to the Tree of Life, the gates of Paradise will be opened anew, and the perfect life of the beginning of history will have returned.[4] The fruit of the Tree of Life and the food of the angels are identical eschatological ideas. The Jewish Sibylline text mentioned above also says that in the eschaton the believers in the true and eternal God will inherit Life, throughout the aeonian time dwelling in the flourishing garden of Paradise and feasting on the sweet bread from the starry sky.[5] We have already discussed dew as an eschatological blessing.[6] In the description of the Messianic time given in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, dew and manna are mentioned together in Ch. 29, 7-8: "They shall behold marvels every day. For winds shall go forth from before me to bring every morning the fragrance of aromatic fruits, and at the close of the day clouds distilling the dew of health. And it shall come to pass at that selfsame time that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on

[1] *Cf. Protevangelium Jacobi*, 8, 1: καὶ ἐλάμβανεν τροφὴν ἐκ χειρὸς ἀγγέλου. *Evang. Pseudo-Matth.*, 6, 3: *Quotidie esca quam de manu angeli accipiebat ipsa tantum reficiebatur; escam vero quam a pontificibus consequebatur pauperibus dividebat.*

[2] Ed. by C. Wessely, in *Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde*, 18, 1917, 33, col. a, ll. 9-13.

[3] F. Robinson, *Coptic apocryphal Gospels*, (*TS*, IV, 2), Cambridge, 1896, 14-15.

[4] See Bousset and Gressmann, 283-284 and here p. 126. According to Jewish and Christian tradition, Adam too received his food in Paradise from the hands of angels; see texts mentioned in M. Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer V, Nativité de Marie*, Cologne-Geneva, 1958, 63, n.2 (erroneously there *Vita Adae et Evae*, VI, 2, must be IV, 2).

[5] *Oracula Sibyllina*, *frg.* 3, 46-49 (= Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, II, 36, 84-87): οἱ δὲ θεὸν τιμῶντες ἀληθινόν ἀέναόν τε / ζωὴν κληρονομοῦσι, τὸν αἰῶνος χρόνον αὐτοί / οἰκοῦντες παραδείσου ὁμῶς ἐριθηλέα κῆπον / δαινύμενοι γλυκὺν ἄρτον ἀπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.

[6] See p. 342-344.

high, and they will eat of it in those years, because these are they who have come to the consummation of time".[1]

These apocalyptic texts elucidate what both Jew and Christian understood as the meaning of manna and dew as food of the phoenix: they were eschatological gifts, the eating of which allowed the phoenix to participate in advance in the perfection of the eschatological glory. In the following chapter we shall discuss the consequences this has for the interpretation a large part of the Early Christian symbolism of the phoenix, but the main point is already illuminated: although the bird appears at fixed times in our world, it in fact already belongs to the better world awaiting us, it anticipates the eschaton.

Lactantius too has the phoenix feed on dewdrops falling from the nocturnal sky. It seems certain, however, that in this instance we cannot explain the dew as an eschatological boon as could be done for the texts just discussed. In the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* and the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* what is concerned is the food taken by the adult phoenix in its blessed state, whereas according to Lactantius this mature phoenix does not require food.[2] He says that the bird is only nourished by the heavenly dew in its earliest youth: from the moment it emerges from its egg-shaped cocoon until it has developed into the true phoenix. This restriction of the food to the young phoenix cannot be an imaginative invention of Lactantius because we have already seen that there is a report in the *Physiologus of Vienna* concerning the nourishment of the immature phoenix.[3] The relevant passage in Lactantius reads as follows: "It is not permitted any food in our world, no one is responsible for the feeding of the callow fledgling. It tastes the ambrosial drops of heavenly nectar, a delicate drink fallen from the starry sky. These it collects, with them the bird feeds itself amid the delicious fragrances until his body is fully grown.[4]

[1] Trans. R. H. Charles, in Charles, II, 498: see also *ch.* 73, 2 (518): "*healing shall descend in dew*". The "healing" dew implies the reading of the LXX in *Isaiah*, xxvi.19, see p. 342, n. 2.

[2] Lactantius, 168: *nutrix ipsa sui, semper alumna sibi*; see also Zeno of Verona in note 4.

[3] See p. 338, n. 1.

[4] Lactantius, vss. 109-114: *Non illi cibus est nostro concessus in orbe / nec*

Here too, Lactantius confronts us with the problem of whether his information is to be explained on the basis of Classical or Judaeo-Christian ideas, or a combination of the two. An expression like "ambrosial drops of heavenly nectar" sounds rather Classical. Nectar and ambrosia were the food of the gods and of those beings related to them.[1] As a parallel to the feeding of the newborn phoenix as given by Lactantius, we may point to a report of the poetess Myro that the young Zeus in his Cretan cave was fed by doves, which brought him ambrosia from the waves of the sea, and by a gigantic eagle, which fetched nectar for him from a rock.[2] In other traditions honey is mentioned as the food of the young Zeus.[3] According to Classical ideas, honey formed the most important component of both nectar and ambrosia, so that honey from heavenly dew could conversely be called nectar.[4] It therefore remains possible that Lactantius had honey in mind. But it is not very likely that for the food of the young phoenix Lactantius was inspired by traditions concerning the food of the young Zeus. The idea that the food of the gods comes down like dew was quite unknown in the Classical world, so that in using the word nectar Lactantius must have intended a

cuiquam inplumem pascere cura subest. / Ambrosios libat caelesti nectare rores, / stellifero tenues qui cecidere polo. / Hos legit, his alitur mediis in odoribus ales, / donec maturam proferat effigiem. Apparently dependent on vs.110, is Zeno of Verona, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 381A): *nec officio alieno nutritur;* see C. Weyman, *Zum Phoenix des Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, N.F. 47, 1892, 640; *cf.* also Gregory of Tours on p. 350 in n. 1.

[1] See Wernicke, art. *Ambrosia und Nektar*, in *RE*, 1, 1894, 1809-1812 and F. Schwemm, *Nektar*, in *RE*, 16, 2, 1935, 2240.

[2] Cited by Athenaeus, *Deipnos.*, XI, 491b, and Eustathius, *Comm. ad Iliad.*, XXIV, vs.292. Reference is made to this text in another connection by Hubaux and Leroy, 208-209, with a reference to A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, I, Cambridge, 1913, 182, n.8.

[3] Bees were supposed to have brought it to him in his cave on Crete; for this and other foods of Zeus, see R. F. Willets, *Cretan cults and festivals*, London, 1962, 216.

[4] See Liddell-Scott, 1166, s.v. νέκταρ, II and Wernicke, *o.c.*, 1810. Thus, on this point there is agreement with the Jewish-Christian tradition concerning manna and dew; see also the late gloss in Hesychius s.v. ἀμβροσία (ed K. Latte Hauniae, 1953, 123): θεῖα θαυμαστὰ τροφή, ἢ μάννα. The ambrosia-eating horses of the sun god (e.g. Ovid, *Metam.*, IV, 215: *ambrosiam pro gramine habent equi Solis*; see also *ibidem*, II, 120) may be compared with the manna- and dew-eating phoenix of the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, which also escorts the sun on his daily journey across the skies.

poetic description of dew rather than the food of the gods. Gregory of Tours, who made a prose summary of the often rather laboured poetry of Lactantius, simply says that the only food of the phoenix was the dew of heaven.[1] Furthermore, it seems probable that in Lactantius the Jewish and Christian concept of dew as a special boon from God was assumed, because in both the Hellenistic-Jewish and the Christian literature this heavenly food is indicated as ambrosia.[2] This is made even more probable by the only real parallel that can be put forward for what Lactantius has to say about the food of the young phoenix.

The idea that dew can serve as food was known in Classical times, since it was generally accepted that the cicada lived on dew alone.[3] This erroneous conclusion was drawn from the observation of the clear droplets excreted by the cicada on the trees they inhabit, which were taken for dew. Although it was also believed that this insect had no mouth and therefore could not take normal food, these "dewdrops" were never considered to be a special, divine food. We have already seen that according to Lucian the happy dwellers on the moon fed themselves with dew.[4] But Lactantius is speaking not of the food of the adult phoenix in Paradise but of the temporary food of the newborn phoenix in our world. He also cannot have been

[1] Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stell. ratio*, 12: *nec cuiquam homini, dum inplumis est, pascere cura est. Tantum caelesti rore nutrita, ad pristinam speciem revocatur.*

[2] *Sapienta Salomonis*, 19, 21 called manna ἀμβροσία τροφή; *cf.* Philo, *De somn.*, II, 249: τὸ χαρᾶς, τὸ εὐφροσύνης ἀμβρόσιον; both places mentioned by A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, (Suppl. to *Novum Testamentum*, V), Leiden, 1962, 176. In the *Acta Thomae* the divine food is called ambrosia several times; *ch.* 6: ὁ βασιλεύς, τρέφων τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀμβροσίᾳ τοὺς ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἱδρυμένους; *ch.* 7: ... τοῦ δεσπότου αὐτῶν, οὗ τὴν ἀμβροσίαν βρῶσιν ἐδέξαντο μηδὲν ὅλως ἀπουσίαν ἔχουσαν (for this remarkable feature, see p. 351 here); *ch.* 36: ἀλλὰ λέγομεν ... περὶ τῆς ἀμβρωσιώδους τροφῆς, the Syriac text speaks here of "*the incorruptible food of the tree of life*", (Klijn, 84), see also p. 346, n. 5. For ambrosia and nectar in the Christian sense, reference can be made in the Latin literature to e.g. Prudentius, *Cathemer.*, III (ante cibum), 21-25: *Hic mihi nulla rosae spolia, / nullus aromate fragrat odor, / sed liquor influit ambrosius / nectareamque fidem redolet, / fusus ab usque Patris gremio*; see also p. 337, n. 5.

[3] See Keller, (p. 337, n. 1), II, 401-406 and Steier, *Tettix*, 3, in *RE*, 2. Reihe, 5, 1, 1934, 1113-1119, esp. 1117.

[4] See p. 339, n. 2 and p. 340, n. 2.

inspired by Ctesias' report about the bird *rhyntaces*, which was said to live on wind and dew,[1] and in any case this bird leads us outside the Classical world: Ctesias, the Greek physician at the court of Artaxerxes II, here gives the Persian view of a fabulous animal. It is not impossible that the same kind of ideas about dew developed in Persia as in Jewish religious thinking. The rhyntaces had no form of excrement but was filled with fat, from which the Persians concluded that it fed only on wind and dew. It is remarkable that the rabbis ascribed the same characteristics to manna as the Persians to wind and dew: manna too is completely incorporated into the body, it contains nothing that cannot be used and would have to be expelled by the body.[2] Whatever the relationship between these Persian and Jewish ideas about dew may be, it may in any case be said that the conclusion drawn in the fragment from Ctesias about the food of the rhyntaces would have been anything but obvious to the Classical reader, since this nourishing quality was never assigned to dew in the Graeco-Roman world.

These "parallels"[3] fail to elucidate for us Lactantius' statement

[1] For the text, see p. 337, n. 2. Other mentions of the *rhyntaces*, with the spelling *rhyndace*: Hesychius, *Lexicon*, s.v. ῥυνδάκη (ed. Schmidt, 1861, 436.): ὀρνίθιον ἡλίκον, περιστερά and Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 72, 44b (ed. Henry, Paris, 1959, I, 131): ὀρνίθιον μικρόν, μέγεθος ἴσον ᾠοῦ (ῥυνδάκκην Πέρσαι τὸ ὀρνίθιον καλοῦσι). There may be a connection between the rhyntaces and the bird of paradise: in the Middle Ages it was believed that the bird of paradise lived solely on the dew of heaven and the fragrance of flowers, and that it had no legs, see F. E. Hulme, *Natural history, lore and legend*, London, 1895, 209 and D. W. Thompson, *A glossary of Greek birds*, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1936, 257, 309.

[2] See Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, III, 44, 246, VI, 98.

[3] Fitzpatrick mentions as most interesting parallel Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XXVI, 183-214, which mentions the honey trees in the plain of Arizantia: these trees are watered by the morning dew and as a result the leaves yield honey. Large flocks of birds are attracted by the honey and remain hovering over the trees. Snakes too sip the liquid and a delicious honey drips from their mouths, so that they spew more of the sweet sap than of their own bitter poison. Nonnus here describes a Paradise-like region; in the time of the Golden Age the trees dripped honey too; *cf.* Virgil, *Eclogae*, IV, 30: *et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella*; Ovid, *Metam.*, I, 112; *Aetna*, 13-14; Horatius, *Epod.*, XVI, 46. The honey-spewing snakes may be compared to the snakes under the balsam tree mentioned by Pausanias, see p. 335, n. 3. On the honey-dripping trees Nonnus places the *catreus* and the *orion*, which on some points are comparable to the phoenix (see p. 251-260), but he then

that in its earliest youth the phoenix lives on heavenly dew. The only true parallel is to be found in an Early Christian tradition according to which the already-mentioned young ravens are fed by God with dew if their parent desert them. The agreement is so striking that it cannot be a matter of chance, and requires further discussion.

The idea that the young raven is fed in a special way by God is of Jewish origin. It is not mentioned in the Classical literature. Aristotle reported that the raven casts its young out of the nest, and this was taken over by Pliny.[1] This conclusion was probably drawn from the young birds' awkward attempts at flight. Their cries were interpreted as a demand for food, *Ps.* cxlvii (LXX: cxlvi).9 and *Job* xxxviii.41 giving the earliest examples. The rabbis gave a quite different explanation of the helplessness of the young raven than was offered by Aristotle and Pliny: the old ravens did not drive the young from the nest but themselves fled in fear as soon as their eggs had hatched. What terrified them was their white children, which they took for snakes. The parents only fed their young after the nestlings' plumage became black and they were recognizable as ravens; until that moment they were fed by God in a special way.[2] This idea became known in the Early Church; Gregory the Great and Isidore of Seville say that the raven only feeds its young after their feathers have became black, leaving them hungry until it can see their resemblance to itself.[3] There was disagreement among the

clearly shifts to another subject: the trees no longer play a role. The passage from Nonnus does not supply any parallel to Lactantius' report that the young phoenix feeds on dew.

[1] Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.*, VI, 6 (563b), Pliny, X, 31. See Keller, (p. 337, n. 1), II, 92-109, esp. 93-94; Gossen, *Rabe*, in *RE*, 2. Reihe 1, 1, 1914, 19-23; Forstner, *Welt der Symbole*, 337-339.

[2] See Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, I, 39, 113, V, 56; Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 101-102.

[3] Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, XXX, 33 (*PL* 76, 542B): *Editis namque pullis, ut fertur, escam plene praebere dissimulat, priusquam plumescendo nigrescant, eosque inedia affici patitur, quoadusque in illis per pennarum nigredinem sua similitudo videatur.* Isidore of Seville, *Etymol.*, XII, 43; *Fertur haec avis, quod editis pullis escam plene non praebeat, priusquam in eis per pinnarum nigredinem similitudinem proprii coloris agnoscat. Postquam vero eos tetros plumis aspexerit in toto agnitos abundantius pascit. Cf.* also Pseudo-Hugo of St. Victor, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, IV, 3 (*PL* 177, 143A): *fetus nisi nigrescant non nutrit.*

rabbis and also among the Christians concerning the food that God provided for the bald raven chicks. Certain Jewish scholars held the opinion that the young ravens fed on the maggots appearing from their excrement.[1] The same is found in the commentary on Job by the Alexandrian deacon Olympiodorus (early sixth century): the young ravens are wholly nourished on small animals reared in the nest.[2] It is remarkable to encounter the same idea in Servius, who therefore—albeit probably indirectly—must have drawn on a Jewish or Christian source, since it was unknown in the Classical world.[3] Other rabbis thought that God sent huge swarms of flies to the young ravens, the flies that landed in their gaping beaks providing them with food until they developed far enough to resemble their parents.[4] The same assumption was made by the Greek commentator Blemmydes Nicephorus (thirteenth century): by the providence of God, they are fed on small animals deriving from the air.[5] The Syriac *Historia naturalis* offers the same information, except that a natural explanation is given for the phenomenon: the flies and mosquitoes are attracted by the looseness of their flesh and the stench in their nest.[6] We have already mentioned what Eusebius thought: the young ravens are fed by "a certain food from the air driven into their mouth by a gentle breeze".[7] It is of course possible that he too had insects in mind, but if so, one is led to wonder why he left this point so vague. It seems more probable that

[1] Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, I, 39; variant in Midrash, see J. Israelstam-J. Slotki, *Midrash Rabbah, Leviticus*, London, 1939, 235.

[2] Olympiodorus, *In Jobum, ad* xxxviii, 41 (*PG* 93, 412A): καὶ ὑπὸ μικρῶν τινων ζωϋφίων γινομένων ἐν ταῖς νεοσσιαῖς ἐκτρέφεσθαι.

[3] Servius on Virgil, *Georgica*, I, 414 (ed. Thilo-Hagen, III, 209): *sed quadam ratione naturae haec ad suos congerunt nidos, quae vermes possint creare, ex quibus relicti eorum pulli aluntur interdum.*

[4] Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, 102.

[5] Blemmydes Nicephorus, *Expositio in Psalmos, ad* cxlvi.9 (*PG* 142, 1617D): καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἀέρος συνεφέλκοντας τοῖς στόμασιν αὐτῶν ζωΰφιά τινα πρὸς τροφήν.

[6] Syr. *Hist. Nat.*, 39 (ed. K. Ahrens, *Das "Buch der Naturgegenstände"*, Kiel, 1892, 51): "*wegen der Lockerheit ihres Fleisches und wegen ihres stinkendes Geruches versammeln sich bei ihnen Mücken und Schnaken; dann öffnen die jungen Raben ihren Mund und die Mücken gehen hinein und werden verschlungen, und so finden sie Nahrung für sich*'.

[7] See p. 337, n. 3.

he had in mind the Greek idea of the nourishing substances in the air formed by the effluvia arising from the ocean and the earth.[1]

Only in the western exegetical literature do we find the tradition most interesting to us in this connection, i.e. that the young ravens are fed by God on the dew of heaven. This idea is given most explicitly by Jerome and Cassiodorus,[2] but it must have been known earlier, since the former, in his commentaries on the Psalms and Job, mentions as his sources the *philosophi* and the *philologi*, respectively, and Cassiodorus says that he gives an opinion of the *physiologi*.

Just which authors are meant by these indications can no longer be determined. But since Servius seems to have known one of the original Jewish ideas about the food of the young ravens it is probable that the various views on this point were discussed in the schools of rhetoric of the fourth century; we may think, for instance, of Donatus, who was Jerome's teacher and whose work had great influence on that of Servius.[3] The idea of the young ravens fed on dew does not occur in the rabbinical literature, but one wonders whether it too might not have been Jewish in origin, because it is quite consistent with the Jewish view of dew as a form of divine grace.

[1] See p. 338-339.

[2] Jerome, *Commentaria in Jobum, ad* xxxviii.41 (*PL* 26, 766C): *Nam et ad hunc intellectum spiritualem pertinet, quod corvi rore pasci dicuntur, sicut philologi se referunt indagasse;* and *Breviarium in Psalmos, ad* cxlvi.9, (*PL* 26, 1256A-B): *Nos vero qui de corvis nati sumus, non cadavera expectamus, sed rorem. Pulli enim corvorum dicuntur de rore vivere. Sic enim philosophi dicunt, quod de rore vivant pulli corvorum.* Cassiodorus, *Expositio in Psalterium, ad* cxlvi.9 (*PL* 70, 1037B): *pulli vero corvorum (ut physiologi volunt) coelesti rore vescuntur, et adhuc paternas escas, id est cadaverum fetores, beneficio aetatis ignorant.* Before Jerome, Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus in CXLVI Psalmum*, 11-12, (*PL* 9, 874) went into detail concerning the spiritual explanation of the food of the young raven, although without mentioning the nature of this food; it is not impossible, however, that he too had dew in mind, since he says that the faithful are fed each day by God, like the young raven, *quibus quotidie a Deo producente in prophetis doctrinae praedicationem, tamquam in montibus foenum, cibi coelestis praebetur alimonia. Cf.* also Prosper of Aquitania, *Psalm. C-CL expositio, ad* cxlvi.9 (*PL* 51, 419B), who makes the same comparison: *et sancti Spiritus pascuntur alimonia.*

[3] G. Brugnoli, *Donato et Girolamo*, in *Vetera Christianorum*, 2, 1965, 139-149. Wessner, *Servius*, 8, in *RE*, 2. Reihe 2, 2, 1923, 1841.

The strong resemblance between the reports of Jerome and Cassiodorus on the young raven's food and that of Lactantius on the food of the young phoenix is unmistakable. Both concern a newborn bird left uncared for and therefore fed by God on heavenly dew. In both cases this unusual food is given only to the still callow bird, it is no longer required when the young raven has taken on the dark appearance of its kind or the initially unrecognizable phoenix has acquired its adult form.[1] This striking agreement can only be explained if we assume that Lactantius drew a parallel between the nourishment of the still callow parentless phoenix and that of the equally bald young raven deserted by its parents.

According to these texts, both the young and the adult phoenix were assumed to live on a moist nourishing substance from the air. For the adult phoenix this idea seems completely determined by the eschatological symbolism attached to the myth of the phoenix. In Claudian the background is formed by the Classical, popular-philosophical ideas about the abode of the pure soul in heavenly regions; in the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* and the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* by the Judaeo-Christian conceptions concerning the happy state that would begin for the elect in the eschaton. In the *Physiologus of Vienna*, which is somewhat obscure on this point, the food of the callow young phoenix seems to be taken in the Classical sense: the bird is fed by "the water and the dry". Lactantius, to the contrary, seems to assume the Jewish and Christian conception of dew as a divine boon, suggesting a striking and certainly not coincidental parallellism with the nourishment of the young raven.

It is quite possible that the idea that the phoenix was nourished with a divine food only when it was young, was determined by theological considerations. It has already been pointed out that according to a well-known Jewish and Christian idea, the angels—of whom the devout are to be the equals in the eschaton—neither ate nor drank: they were nourished by the splendour and the wisdom of

[1] The parallelism goes even further: according to the Jewish tradition, it took three days before the feathers of the young raven became black, and according to the Christian tradition of the *Physiologus*, it took three days before the phoenix took on the appearance of its predecessor; see the reference given on p. 353 in n. 1, and for the phoenix, p. 214-215.

God or by the contemplation of God.[1] Ephraem the Syrian says that the righteous, who are nourished in Paradise by the winds, are satiated without food and joyous without drink.[2] Their food is formed mainly by the exquisite fragrance that fills Paradise and is elsewhere interpreted by Ephraem as the Holy Ghost.[3] We have already seen that manna and dew were explained as the divine Wisdom, the *Logos*, or the Holy Ghost.[4] The *Byzantine Physiologus* has discarded all symbolism on this point and without qualification applies this aspect of life in the presence of God to the phoenix: the phoenix never eats or drinks but is nourished by the Holy Ghost.[5]

These ideas concerning the food in the eschatological Paradise offer a satisfactory explanation of Lactantius' assumption that the adult phoenix did not require food. The symbolism of the divine food also explains why, according to him, the young phoenix, which has not yet reached the state of perfection and still lives in our world, is fed on the dew of heaven: dew and manna, or in a Classical image nectar and ambrosia, represent the sacraments[6] by which believers are supported in their earthly struggle and which, for them, realize the eschaton in advance.

[1] For this, see the places in Michl's article cited on p. 346, in n. 2.

[2] Ephraem, *Hymni de paradiso*, IX, 9 (trans. Beck, (see p. 337, n. 5), 35): "*Wer lag (je) zu Tisch und erlabte sich ohne Mühe, / sich sättigend ohne Speise und sich erheiternd ohne Trank? / Ein Windhauch tränkt ihn, ein andrer sättigt ihn*".

[3] Ephraem, *Hymni de paradiso*, IX, 17 (trans. Beck, 37): "*Der Duft des Paradieses ernährt statt des Brotes, / und jener leben (spendende) Hauch dient statt des Trankes*'. *Idem*, XI, 14, (trans. Beck, 45, *cf.* there n. 7 *ad.* XI, 10): at the feast of Pentecost the apostles were filled with the breath, the scent of Paradise.

[4] See p. 343, 344, 345, 355, n. 2.

[5] *Byzantine Physiologus*, 10: μηδαμῶς τι ἐσθίων, ἀλλὰ τρεφόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου. Sbordone, *La fenice*, 4, juxtaposes the texts of Claudian and of the *Physiologus*: "*nel Physiologus e in Caudiano si pasce di aria*'. Hubaux and Leroy, who devoted only a few pages to the food of the phoenix (79-81 and 50, n.1) think that Sbordone did so "*avec raison*" (p. 80). The double meaning of πνεῦμα must have had its effect in the described complex of conceptions but did not constitute its origin.

[6] For manna, see p. 346; for the dew, see e.g. Prudentius on p. 343, in n. 6.

CHAPTER TEN

THE SEX

The discussion of the various traditions concerning the death and resurrection of the phoenix has brought out the fact that in Classical times the bird was unanimously considered to reproduce itself a-sexually. This characteristic is stressed in many texts.[1] It was impossible for the phoenix to arise from the sexual union of a male and a female bird of the same species, since there was always only one in existence.[2] Words expressing the singularity and the unique occurrence of the phoenix appear repeatedly in the texts, often as fixed epithets: it is εἷς-*unus*,[3] μόνος-*solus*,[4] *singularis*,[5] *unicus*,[6] and

[1] *Cf.* Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 392: *Una est, quae reparet seque ipsa reseminet, ales;* Diogenes Laertius, IX, 79: τῶν γὰρ ζῴων τὰ μὲν χωρὶς μίξεως γίνεσθαι ὡς τὰ πυρίβια καὶ ὁ Ἀράβιος φοῖνιξ καὶ εὐλαί. Pomp. Mela, III, 83: *non enim coitu concipitur partuve generatur;* Ambrose, *Expos. Ps. cxviii*, 19, 13: *phoenix coitus corporeos ignorat, libidinis nescit inlecebras;* Zeno of Verona, *Tract.*, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 381A): *Phoenix avis illa ..., quae nobilitatem generis sui non a parentibus accepit, non liberis tradit ... non ex coitu nascitur;* Dionysius, *De aucupio*, I, 32: γονέων ἄτερ καὶ μίξεων χωρὶς ὑφιστάμενος ... ὥστε ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλιακῆς μόνης αὐγῆς, πατρός τε καὶ μητρὸς χωρίς, τὸν ὄρνιν γίγνεσθαι τοῦτον.

[2] *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15: ὄρνεον ... ὃ λέγουσιν ἄζυγον ὑπάρχειν καὶ μόνον ἐν δημιουργίᾳ; Rufinus, *Expositio Symboli*, 9: *Orientis avem quam phoenicem vocant, in tantum sine coniuge nasci vel renasci constet, ut semper una sit, et semper sibi ipsa nascendo vel renascendo succedat?* Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stell.*, 12: ... *quae alterius avis non est iuncta consortio nec iuncta coniugio;* Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaem.* (*PG* 18, 729 D-732A); μὴ συνιστάμενον διαδοχῇ, ἀλλ' ὑπάρχειν αὐτὸ μονώτατον; Michael Glycas, *Annales*, I (*PG* 158, 108C): φοῖνιξ ... ἄζυγος ἐν τῇ δημιουργίᾳ.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, X, 3; Philostratus, *Via Apoll.*, III, 49; Rufinus, see n. 2; *Carmen in laudem Solis*, 35; Boethius, *In Isagog. Porphyrii commenta*, ed. sec., III, 6; Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 387; *Schol.* on Aristides, 45, 107; *Schol.* on Lucan, VI, 680, no. 2.

[4] *Didascalia*, 40; *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15; Claudian, *Phoenix*, 8; Dracontius, *Romulea*, X, 104.

[5] Tertullian, *De resurr. mort.*, 13 *(de singularitate famosum)*, similarly, in dependence on him, Pseudo-Ambrose, *De Trinitate*, 34 (*PL* 17, 545A); Isidore of Seville, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22 (followed by many medieval authors); Pseudo-Titus, *Epistula*, 338 (*cf.* below, p. 386, n. 1).

[6] Ovid, *Amores*, II, 6, 54; Pomp. Mela, III, 83; *Didascalia*, 40; Claudian,

μονογενής.[1] The last of these terms is found only in the writings of Christian authors. This need not, however, be taken to imply that the choice of this word was influenced by the circumstance that the phoenix could be a symbol of Christ, the "only-begotten" of God.[2] The primary meaning of the word is "only", "single", "unique of its kind",[3] and when it is applied to the phoenix this is indeed what is primarily intended. But we shall see below that it is not impossible that with respect to the phoenix a deeper sense must be assigned to this term.[4]

In only one text is it explicitly stated that two of these birds occur at the same time: [5] according to Horapollo, the young and the old phoenix fly together to Heliopolis, where the elder dies at sunrise. This has to do with Horapollo's version of the genesis of the new phoenix, which deviates from all the Classical traditions: it arises from the fluid issuing from a wound that the old phoenix deliberately inflicts on itself.[6] It is nevertheless clear, however, that Horapollo too was unable to imagine that the phoenix could arise in any way except an asexual one.

For the author of the *Didascalia*, the fact that there is always only one phoenix at a time made this bird a still more convincing proof of the possiblity of the resurrection of the dead. The exact reading of the relevant passage in the original Greek text can no

De consul. Stilichonis, II, 417; Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*, V, 23, 79; Isidore of Seville, see n. 5 above; Eugenius, *Carmina*, XLIV.

[1] *I Clement*, 25, 2; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 98; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, IV, 72; *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15; Cyril of Jeruzalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1025B); Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comment. in Hexaem.*, (*PG* 18, 729D); Michael Glycas, *Annales*, I, (PG 158, 108C); Ishô'dâdh, *Comm. in Job.*, *ad* xl.20 (see below, p. 359, n. 3).

[2] *Cf.* e.g. *John* i.18; iii.16.

[3] See Liddell-Scott, 1144 s.v., W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum N.T.*, 5th ed., Berlin, 1958, 1042-1043, and F. Büchsel, Μονογενής, in *ThWNT*, IV, 745-746.

[4] See below, p. 381.

[5] According to the *Slavonic Enoch*, 8 (*ed.* Vaillant, p. 21) there are seven phoenixes in the sixth heaven: they have only their name in common with the original bird, since they have become angels (see p. 290). Antiphanes, *frg.* 175 in Athenaeus, XIV, 655b, Dionysius of Alexandria, *De natura*, *frg.* 3, in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, XIV, 25, 4, and Aelian, VI, 58 speak of φοίνικες; they mean however the separate specimens of the one phoenix.

[6] Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, II, 57, See also p. 197.

longer be determined,[1] but its meaning is unmistakable: if two or more phoenixes could occur at the same time, this could be taken to imply that their procreation might have followed the usual sexual pattern; therefore, the singular occurrence makes it much more clear that by dying the phoenix acquires a new life.

In the seventh century the ancient tradition concerning the a-sexual genesis of the phoenix and it solitary existence was challenged on logical and scriptural grounds by Maximus Confessor,[2] who was forced to take this step because the Monophysites had demonstrated the one nature in the person of Christ on the basis of that of the phoenix.[3] After apologizing for giving so much attention to the Monophysite "proof", he puts forward the following line of reasoning. If the phoenix is a bird, then it is also an animal in all respects; but if it is an animal, it also has an animate and perceptive body. But if the phoenix has such a body, it is also subject to the law of generation and decay.[4] It is impossible, however, that bodies subject to this law can in essence be of one nature; to the contrary, the descent from each other according to their kind is a very evident

[1] *Didascalia*, 40; see R. H. Connoly, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, Oxford, 1929, 173 for the differences between the Syriac and the Latin texts. The latter reads: *Nam si esset par aut multi, ipsi multi velut fantasma videri poterant hominibus: nunc autem videtur, cum ingrediatur, quia solum est.*

[2] Maximus Confessor, *Epistulae*, XIII, (*PG* 91, 517D-519E).

[3] *Cf.* Ishô'dâdh, *Comm. in Jobum, ad* xl.20 (ed. Schliebitz, 78): "*Und dagegen, dass die Orthodoxen sagen: Kein Lebewesen wäre in der Schöpfung einzeln vorhanden, führen jene* (sc. the Monophysites) *an die Sonne und den Mond und den Himmel und die vier Elemente, die je einzeln geschaffen sind, und den Vogel Phönix, der einzig in (seiner) Art ist*". *Cf.* the reasoning of Boethius *In Isagogen Porphyrii commenta*, ed. sec. III,6: *Sunt enim quaedam quae de numero differentibus minime dicuntur, ut phoenix, sol, luna, mundus* (a related argumentation in Bonaventura, *Sententiae*, I, 4, 3). Probably, the Monophysites were not the first to make use of the phoenix in a similar way. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.*, 31, 10 (*PG* 36, 144C) says, demonstrating ἐκ τῆς περὶ ζώων ἱστορίας the one divine nature, the ὁμοούσια, of the Father and the Son: εἰ δέ τῳ πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ ἄλλος ἐστὶ τρόπος γεννήσεως, αὐτό τι ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ δαπανώμενον καὶ τικτόμενον. He does not mention the phoenix explicitly, and, therefore, it remains possible that he had other animals in mind. According to Elias of Crete (*PG* 36, 829) Gregory thought of the phoenix.

[4] Maximus Confessor, *Epistulae*, XIII, (*PG* 91, 519A): εἴπερ ζῶον, καὶ σῶμα ἔμψυχον αἰσθητικόν. Εἰ δὲ σῶμα ἔμψυχον αἰσθητικόν ἐστι ὁ φοῖνιξ, καὶ ὑπὸ γένεσίν ἐστι δηλονότι καὶ φθοράν. In the *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, 170, 2 (ed. Böhlig-Labib, 95) too, the phoenix is called an ἔμψυχον ζῶον.

characteristic of their being and the definition of it.[1] This is confirmed by the Holy Scripture in *Gen.* vii.1-3(LXX), where Noah is commanded to take into the ark seven pairs of the clean animals and two pairs of the unclean ones, with the explicit inclusion of birds. If the phoenix, as a living bird, must be included among these, then according to the divine words it cannot be in essence of one nature but rather it, too, must occur as male and female.

By this argumentation, Maximus implicitly rejects the entire phoenix myth. In Classical times there was no one else who went that far,[2] but when in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries scholars began to dismiss the Classical phoenix tradition as unacceptable, they took over his arguments eagerly.[3]

In view of the general acceptance of the bird's asexual propagation, it is hardly surprising that almost no attention is given in the Classical sources to the question of the sex of the phoenix. It was usually referred to as a male animal, although there are a few cases in which it was considered as female.[4] But the phoenix argumentation of the Monophysites implies that they assigned to it a unique sexual status. This could mean that they saw it as neither male nor female, in other words as sexless; but it is also possible that they took it to be both male and female, the two sexes being merged to become a higher, perfect unity.

It is evident from the texts that both these conceptions of the sex of the phoenix were known. As a quite sexless creature it occurs in speculations on the sex of the soul; as bisexual we encounter it in

[1] Maximus Confessor, *Epistulae*, XIII, (*PG* 91, 519A): ὧν ἡ ἐξ ἀλλήλων κατ' εἶδος διαδοχὴ ἀρίδηλος χαρακτὴρ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ὅρος ἐστί.

[2] Nevertheless, various writers have expressed doubt concerning the phoenix tradition, *cf.* e.g. Herodotus, II, 73: ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες; Pliny, *Hist. nat.*, X, 3: *haud scio an fabulose* (*cf.* also XXIX, 29); Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28: *Haec incerta et fabulosis aucta: ceterum aspici aliquando in Aegypto eam volucrem non ambigitur;* Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 98: ἐάνπερ ᾖ ἀληθές; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.*, XXXI, 10 (*PG* 36; 144C), see p. 359, n. 3. Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 126, objected to Clement of Rome's use of the phoenix myth; see p. 4, n. 2.

[3] See e.g. W. Franzius, *Historia animalium sacra* ..., ed. 3, Wittebergae, 1624, 347-353.

[4] Female in Laevius, *Pterygion phoenicis*, in Charisius, *Ars grammatica*, IV, 6 (see p. 269), *Carmen in laudem solis*, 31, 33, 35 and Dracontius, *Romulea*, X, 104.

profound considerations on the true self of man, which is characterized by a merging of the sexes to form a unity beyond all earthly sexuality. To understand certain statements about the phoenix properly, we must go into both these concepts in some detail.

The development of Greek thinking about the soul has been the subject of numerous scholarly studies.[1] It will suffice here to mention the most important phases in this development. In Homer the word ψυχή denotes both the abstract notion "life" and the spirit of a dead person, which is a clearly recognizable image (εἴδωλον) of the individual. The link between these two highly divergent meanings is formed by the meaning of ψυχή as "breath".[2] In as early an author as Anaximenes the word ψυχή has already absorbed the notion θυμός, which is still independent in Homer: the soul is that which holds together and governs the individual.[3] This view of the soul as a union of life and consciousness is presupposed in the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. It is the Pythagorean conceptions of the soul which interest us in relation to the phoenix.

It was of great importance that the Pythagoreans, perhaps on archaic grounds, incorporated the equally abstract notion δαίμων into their conception of the soul and that this demon of an individual was identified with his εἴδωλον. A man has in himself and opposite himself, as his true self, his demon, which in all external respects is exactly like him.[4] It was of equally great importance for the development of the notion soul that the Pythagoreans assigned a divine origin to this self-aware soul as the essence of a man. As early an author as Pindar stated this explicitly in a poem in which he says that the human body cannot escape death but that a living counterpart of life survives, for this counterpart is of divine origin; it sleeps as long as the body is active, although it often shows the sleeper in a dream what the future is to bring.[5] The Pythagoreans could even

[1] We refer here only to the summaries given by Jaeger, *Theologie*, 88-106; Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, 192-197, and Detienne, *DAÏMÔN*, 67-68.

[2] *Cf.* Jaeger, *Theologie*, 88-95; Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, 194.

[3] Anaximenes, *frg.* B. 2 (*FVS*, I, 95 = Aetius, *De plac. philos.*, I, 3, 4): ἡ ψυχή ... συγκρατεῖ ἡμᾶς, *cf.* Jaeger, *Theologie*, 95-99.

[4] For δαίμων, see Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, 216-222 and for the Pythagorean view, especially Detienne, *DAÏMÔN*, *passim*, particularly 90-91 and 174-175 (*frgs.* 25-28).

[5] Pindar, *frg.* 131 (Schroeder = Plutarch, *Cons. ad Apoll.*, 35 (120E)), 2-3:

say whether a demon appearing in a dream belonged to the soul of a living or a dead man, because in the latter case the demon had no shadow and did not blink its eyes.[1] This view of the soul as a replica of the individual that is at the same time his divine counterpart and his true self, had a strong influence in several directions. It will suffice here to mention the conception of the guardian angel as counterpart of a man in the rabbinical literature, in the New Testament, and in Early Christianity, as well as related ideas found in Valentinian Gnosticism and in Manicheism.[2]

What is of special interest to us in connection with the phoenix is the idea that the human soul has a form identical to that of the individual's body. This concept is found in various Early Christian writings. In his *De anima*, Tertullian calls the soul the *homo interior* and the body the *homo exterior*, and says that both have the same appearance.[3] He also expresses the opinion that the soul and the body acquire their sex simultaneously during the embryonic development of the individual. In this connection he mentions that Apelles the heretic supported the idea that the sex of the body is determined by the already determined sex of the incarnated soul.[4] Generally, however, the Early Church accepted that the soul was neither male nor female.[5]

The conception of the bodily form of the soul sometimes took on

ζωὸν δ' ἔτι λείπεται αἰῶνος εἴδωλον· τὸ γάρ ἐστι μόνον / ἐκ θεῶν.

[1] Plutarch, *Aetia Graeca*, 39 (300c) *cf.* Detienne, *DAÏMÔN*, 91.

[2] *Cf.* G. Quispel, *Das ewige Ebenbild des Menschen. Zur Begegnung mit dem Selbst in der Gnosis*, in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 36, 1967, 10-30.

[3] Tertullian, *De anima*, 9, 8: *Hic erit homo interior, alius homo exterior, dupliciter unus* (*cf.* J. H. Waszink, *Q. S. F. Tertulliani De anima*, Amsterdam, 1947, 178); 9, 7: *sic et effigiem de sensu iam tuo concipe non aliam animae humanae deputandam praeter humanam, et quidem eius corporis quod unaquaeque circumtulit.* Origen, *Comm. in Cant. Cantic.*, prol., (*ed.* Baehrens, *GCS* 33, *Werke* VIII, 65, 15ff.) speaks metaphorically about the *animae membra*, to which the *membrorum nomina corporalium* are transferred; *cf.* also *ibid.*, 66, 4ff.

[4] Tertullian, *De Anima*, 36, 2: *anima in utero seminata pariter cum carne pariter cum ipsa sortitur et sexum, ita pariter, ut in causa sexus neutra substantia teneatur* ... 3. *quoniam et Apelles, non pictor, sed haereticus, ante corpora constituens animas viriles et muliebres, sicut a Philumena didicit, utique carnem ut posteriorem ab anima facit accipere sexum.*

[5] See the texts mentioned in Waszink, *De anima*, 420.

rather extensive proportions. This occurred among those groups in which the pious imagination, which gave rise to apocryphal stories, was appreciated much more than speculations of any kind. We may refer here to the *Assumptio Mosis*, in which it is told that when Moses died, Joshua and Caleb had a vision in which they saw both his soul and his body with exactly the same appearance, the one being taken up to heaven and the other remaining on earth.[1] In the so-called *Prayer of Athanasius* the deacon Timothy tells that at the death of the Patriarch he saw his soul being taken to heaven by Michael in exactly the same shape as Athanasius' body.[2] Even more interesting is the conception in one of the oldest versions of the apocryphal *Transitus Mariae*: the apostles report in this work that they saw Mary's soul being placed in the hands of Michael, this soul having the human shape in all details except the sexual characteristics.[3] Here, the concept of the bodily shape of the soul is linked to that of its asexual state. The same combination is found earlier in a certain Vincentius Victor, whose views were attacked by Augustine in his *De anima et eius origine*.

Vincentius Victor had challenged Augustine by arguing that the soul consists of matter and has the same shape as the body, for which he may have based himself on Tertullian.[4] He was also of the opinion that the soul had neither sex, and it was in discussing this point that he referred to the phoenix, which was also considered to have neither sex. Furthermore, he could also have thought of this

[1] *Cf.* Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, VI, 132, 2, and the texts of Origenes and Euodius in A. Resch, *Agrapha*, 2nd ed., (*TU*, N.F., XV, 3/4), Leipzig, 1906 (Reprint: Darmstadt, 1967), 302-303, no. 13.

[2] *The prayer of Saint Athanasius*, ed. E. A. W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic texts in the dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1915, 510-511 (text) and 1019-1020 (trans.).

[3] *Apocryphum de Dormitione B.V.M.*, 35 (ed. A. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la T. S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle*, Thesis Lyon, Paris, 1955, 232): Ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν ψυχὴν Μαρίας παραδεδομένην εἰς χεῖρας Μιχαὴλ πεπληρωμένην ἐν πάσῃ μορφῇ ἀνθρώπου χωρὶς μόνου τοῦ σχήματος τῆς θηλείας καὶ ἄρρενος, μηδενὸς αὐτῇ ὄντος ἄλλου εἰ μὴ ὁμοιότητος παντὸς τοῦ σώματος καὶ λευκότητος ἑπταπλασίως. Wenger also cites an unpublished Latin text (Paris, Lat. 3550), in which only the human form of the soul is concerned, p. 253, *app. crit.* under *nix: animam beate marie ... habentem similem formam hominis et candidam super nivem.*

[4] Thus Waszink, *De anima*, 176-177.

argument because the phoenix was considered to be a symbol of the soul.

Augustine replied that this example was quite irrelevant: the bird indicates the resurrection of the body but supplies no arguments for the sexlessness of the soul. He suggest rather sarcastically that Vincentius Victor must have expected a better reception for his reasoning if he included miscellaneous details about the phoenix in a puerile way. For himself, however, there can be no doubt that the phoenix is either male or female, and he mockingly asks; "Does it have *genitalia masculina* on its body without being masculine or *genitalia femina* without being female?"[1] This makes it evident that Augustine did not consider the phoenix to be an asexual or a bisexual creature. He agrees with Vincentius Victor that the soul has neither sex, but in his opinion this conception can only be maintained if it is also assumed that the soul has no substance and therefore no bodily form.[2]

As indicated by the foregoing, the phoenix was seen not only as an asexual creature but also as bisexual. The latter occurs in discussions of the true self of man. In this context asexuality and bisexuality are closely related concepts, because both cases concern the attempt to define the ideal absence or abolition of the fundamental split in man, which is expressed in sexuality. When only the asexuality of the soul is referred to, this is related to the idea that the soul is the only essential part of the individual. We have already encountered this view among the Pythagoreans, and we shall soon see that it also influenced certain Christian ideas concerning the resurrection of the dead.

Before going into this subject more deeply it will be useful to mention the texts referring to the androgynous character of the phoenix. Achilles Tatius is the only Classical author to indicate that the sex of the phoenix might have some remarkable aspects. He

[1] Augustine, *De anima et eius origine*, IV, 20, 33: *Quod enim de phoenice loqueris, ad rem de qua agitur omnino non pertinet. Resurrectionem quippe illa significat corporum, non sexum destruit animarum ... Numquid enim sunt in eius corpore genitalia masculina et non est masculus, vel feminina et non est femina?*

[2] *Ibid.: Falsa sunt haec, fili, si non vis ut sit in anima sexus, non sit et corpus!*

says that when the bird is examined by the priest in Heliopolis to see whether it is the true one, it shows its genitalia as proof of its identity.[1] Achilles Tatius does not tell what is characteristic of the *pudenda* of the phoenix, but it seems possible that he wished to suggest that it was hermaphroditic.

More important in this connection are the concluding verses of *De ave phoenice.* Lactantius emphasizes the fact that God had made it possible for the phoenix to be reborn out of itself. He considers the bird fortunate because it has no ties with Venus: for it, death is its Venus, and in this lies its only passion: it longs to die so that it can be reborn. It is its own offspring and its own parent and heir, its own nurse and its own nursling. Lactantius also presupposes that it is not known whether the bird is male or female or neither.[2] The various manuscripts give the line in which this uncertainty about the sex of the phoenix is expressed in different readings.[3] Hubaux and Leroy accepted as the correct reading a conjecture according to which the phoenix is also assumed to be both male and female.[4] For

[1] Achilles Tatius, III, 25, 7: ὁ δὲ οἶδεν ἀπιστούμενος καὶ τὰ ἀπόρρητα φαίνει τοῦ σώματος.

[2] Lactantius, 161-170: *At fortunatae sortis finisque volucrem, / cui de se nasci praestitit ipse deus! / Femina ⟨seu sexu⟩ seu mas est sive neütrum, / felix, quae Veneris foedera nulla colit. / Mors illi Venus est, sola est in morte voluptas: / ut possit nasci, appetit ante mori. / Ipsa sibi proles, suus est pater et suus heres, / nutrix ipsa sui, semper alumna sibi. / Ipsa quidem, sed non ⟨eadem est⟩, eademque nec ipsa est, / aeternam vitam mortis adepta bono.*

[3] For the various readings, see M. Caldi, *Ad versum* 163 "*De ave phoenice*" *carminis quod Lactantii fertur,* in *Bollettino di filologia classica,* 33, 1926-1927, 203-205 and Walla, 180; *cf.* also P. de Winterfeld, *Coniectanea,* in *Hermes,* 33, 1898, 172. The readings of the most important manuscripts are:
B: *femina seu masculus est seu neutrum felix*
C: *femina seu masculus est seu neutrum*
D: *femina sit seu masculus aut si forte neutrum*
E: *femina sit aut masculus aut seu forte neutrum*
The reading of Brandt, cited in note 2, is based on the rendition of Lactantius by Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stell. ratio,* 12: *Nam et nescire homines manifestum est cuius sit generis, masculus an femina sive neutrum.* Von Winterfeld, 172, proposes the reading: *femina seu ⟨felix, seu⟩ masculus est, seu neutrum*; Caldi, 204, considers the most probable reading: *seu neutrum seu masculus est seu femina phoenix.* Fitzpatrick, 56 and Walla, 180 prefer Brandt's reading.

[4] They read, p. XV: *Femina seu mas sit seu neutrum seu sit utrumque.* But the translation they give (p. XX) assumes Brandt's reading (see above). The reading they prefer derives from a conjecture made by N. Heinsius: *femina*

our purposes it is not very important which version is the correct one, because although Lactantius leaves some doubts, Zeno of Verona clearly states that the phoenix has both sexes at the same time.[1]

Festugière in particular attempted to demonstrate that there was speculation in the Classical world concerning the hermaphroditic character of the phoenix, this being related to the concepts concerning the androgyny of the highest being and Primeval Man in Hermetism.[2] Although the phoenix does not occur in the Hermetic literature, Festugière thought it highly probable that some doctrines from these sources had enriched the phoenix myth, basing himself on the reading of the passage from Lactantius just cited.[3] The background of this passage is supposed to include conceptions such as those found in the *Poimandres*: the deity, the highest Νοῦς, is simul-

vel mas haec seu neutrum seu sit utrumque. This conjecture was inspired by Ovid's description of Hermaphroditus, *Metam.*, IV, 378-379: *Nec duo sunt et forma duplex, nec femina dici / nec puer ut possit, neutrumque et utrumque videntur*. In the more recent literature this passage is referred to by Fitzpatrick, 90 and C. Brakman, *Opstellen en vertalingen betreffende de Latijnse letterkunde*, IV, Leiden, 1934, 247. In view of this parallel it is indeed possible that Lactantius also mentioned the *utrumque*, but the available information does not permit certainty on this point. Hubaux and Leroy, 6, compared vs.163 with a citation of Laevius in Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, III, 8, 3: *Venerem igitur almum adorans, sive femina sive mas est, ita uti alma Noctiluca est*. They assume this to be a quote from the poem *Pterygion phoenicis* by Laevius and to concern a speculation about the sex of the phoenix. In this poem the phoenix is indeed related to Venus; see p. 269 (*cf*. also Caldi, 163 and Walla, 181-182). It remains possible, although not demonstrable, that the fragment in Macrobius indeed comes from the *Pterygion phoenicis* and that Lactantius was influenced by this.

[1] Zeno of Verona, *Tract.*, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 381A): ... *ipsa est sibi uterque sexus* (*cf*. also below, p. 374, n. 4). C. Weymann, *Zum Phoenix des Lactantius*, in *RhMPh*, 47, 1892, 640, pointed out that Zeno is depending on Lactantius, comparing e.g. the *uterque sexus* of Zeno with the dubious reading *utrumque* in Lactantius.

[2] A.-J. Festugière, *Le symbol du phénix et le mysticisme hermétique*, in *MMAI*, 38, 1941, 147-151, followed by M. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite*, Paris, 1958, 121-123. Festugière's article is included in his *Hermétisme et mystique païenne*, Paris, 1967, 256-260.

[3] Festugière, *Le symbol de phènix*, 147, n. 4. The other texts he mentions (p. 148: Claudian, *Phoenix*, 69-70, 101; Martial, V, 7, and Ovid, *Metam.*, XV 392) do not in themselves prove that the phoenix was seen as an adrogynous being there too.

taneously male and female; from himself he brings forth Primeval Man, who is also hermaphroditic.[1] We shall see that this passage in Lactantius may indeed be related to the conceptions just mentioned, but that the link is much more distant than was assumed by Festugière.

That a connection was indeed drawn between the myth of the Primeval Man and that of the phoenix is shown by the Coptic *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, which formed part of the manuscripts found at Nag Hammadi. In this text there are three phoenixes corresponding to the pneumatic, the psychic, and the choic man. The first of these phoenixes lives forever, the second lives a thousand years, and the third is "consumed".[2] The second phoenix corresponds to the Adam of Paradise, the Primeval Man, to whom this text assigns a hermaphroditic character.[3]

This conception is found in both the Hellenistic-Jewish and the rabbinical literature. Its origins are probably to be sought in Greece, for it is in Plato that we find the first mention of androgyny as characterizing the first people. We shall return to this point, but whatever the origin of this idea may have been, it is drawn on in the Jewish literature for the exegesis of the Biblical reports concerning the creation of man (*Gen.* i.26 and 27; ii.7 and 21; and v.2).

In *Bereshit Rabbah*, the following statement is attributed to Rabbi Jeremiah ben Leazar (= Eleazar): "When the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, he created him an hermaphrodite, for it is said, "male and female created He them and called their name Adam" " (*Gen.* v.2ff, i.27).[4] According to the *Midrash on Leviticus*,

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum*, I, 9 (ed. Nock-Festugière, I, 9): ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυς ὤν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων (*cf.* the commentary in Nock-Festugière, 20, n. 24); and I, 15 (Nock-Fest., 12): ἀρρενόθηλυς δὲ ὤν, ἐξ ἀρρενοθήλεος ὢν πατρός (commentary in Nock-Fest., 22, n. 43). See also *Asclepius*, 20 (Nock-Fest., II, 321) and the detailed commentary on it by W. Scott, *Hermetica*, III, Oxford, 1926, 135-142. In the opinion of Festugière, *Le symbol du phénix*, 148, the phoenix is also called male-female in the *Cyranides*, but this text discusses the *heliodromus*, a sun animal with some points of agreement with the phoenix (see p. 286) and of which it is said that it τεκνογονεῖ ἀρρενοθέλη; this was emended to ἀρρενόθηλυς by Festugière.

[2] *Untitled Gnostic treatise*, 170, 1-13 (ed. Böhlig-Labib, 94).

[3] *Ibid.*, 161, 30-32 (Böhlig-Labib, 72).

[4] *Bereshit Rabbah*, VIII, 1 (trans. H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis*, I, London, 1951, 54).

this was also taught by Rabbi Samuel ben Naḥman.[1] Both rabbis held the opinion that the hermaphroditic first human being was created with two faces.[2] This implied, according to Rabbi Levi in the *Midrash on Leviticus*, that then human beings actually had no back but two body-fronts, the meaning being a male one and a female one.[3] At the creation of Eve, God sawed or split the first human in two, so that two backs resulted, and thus two humans, a man and a woman.[4] The rabbis found confirmation of this interpretation in the text of *Gen.* ii. 21 itself, because they read the word *zela'* not as "rib" but as "side", which is actually possible.[5] All the rabbis who mention the hermaphroditic Adam lived in the third century A.D., but it remains possible that on this point they were transmitting an earlier tradition.[6]

In Hellenistic Judaism we find this myth concerning the Primeval Man, albeit in spiritualized form, in Philo of Alexandria. Philo made a sharp distinction between the creation of man according to *Gen.* i.26-27 and that according to *Gen.* ii.7, i.e. the creation in God's image and the formation from the dust of the earth, respectively. According to *De opificio mundi*, the former concerns man as idea, as genus, as type, spiritual, incorporeal, neither male nor female, imperishable by nature. But the latter concerns the visible individual,

[1] *Midrash on Leviticus*, XIV, 1 (trans. J. Israelstam, *Midrash Rabbah, Leviticus*, London, 1951, 177).

[2] *'Erubin*, 18a (trans. I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Mo'ed, II*, London, 1938, 123) and *Bereshit Rabbah*, VIII, 1 (trans. Freedman, 54).

[3] *Midrash on Leviticus*, XIV, 1 (trans. Israelstam, 177). According to some rabbis, it was originally God's intention to create two humans, but in the end only one was created. *Cf. 'Erubin*, 18a (trans. Epstein, 124), *Berakoth*, 61a (trans. M. Simon, *The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Zera'im*, London, 1948, 382) and *Kethuboth*, 8a (trans. S. Daicher, *The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Nashim*, II, London, 1936, 34).

[4] *Midrash on Leviticus*, XIV, 1 (trans. Israelstam, 177): "*R. Levi said: When man was created, he was created with two body-fronts, and He sawed him in two, so that two backs resulted, one back for the male and another back for the female*". *Cf.* also Rabbi Samuel ben Naḥman in *Bereshit Rabbah*, VIII, 1.

[5] *Cf.* Koehler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon*, 805, s.v. I. צֵלָע.

[6] For the dating of the rabbis mentioned: H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Vol. V/VI, ed. by J. Jeremias and K. Adolph, 2nd ed., Munich, 1963, 230 (Samuel ben Naḥman: *ca.* 260, Palestine), 184 (Jeremiah ben Eleazar: *ca.* 270, Palestine), 202 (Levi, *ca.* 300, Palestine).

possessing certain qualities, composed of body and soul, male or female, and by nature mortal.[1] Whereas in this text the spiritual man is said to be asexual, in *De legum allegoriis* it is stated that this man possesses both the male and the female sex.[2] Here, in this context, it is evident that by asexuality and bisexuality essentially the same thing is meant: both concepts express the original unity and inner harmony of man. The distinction between the sexes accentuates a split in the empirical individual expressed in his sexual desires and leading to his mortality.

Reference must also be made in this connection to a rather self-contained passage in *De opificio mundi*, in which it is said of love that it *reunites* the *separate halves* of, as it were, a single living being, into one whole—which is distinctly reminiscent of the Platonic myth of the Primeval Man to be discussed.[3]

Philo does not explicitly mention the sawing or splitting of the first individual by God, but this aspect of the myth is clearly in the background for him too. For the following discussion of the Christian application of the myth of the androgynous Primeval Man, it will be useful to cite what Philo had to say about the psychic processes

[1] Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 134: ὁ μὲν γὰρ διαπλασθεὶς αἰσθητὸς ἤδη μετέχων ποιότητος, ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς συνεστώς, ἀνὴρ ἢ γυνή, φύσει θνητός· ὁ δὲ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα ἰδέα τις ἢ γένος ἢ σφραγίς, νοητός, ἀσώματος, οὔτ', ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ, ἄφθαρτος φύσει, *cf*. also 76. For the views of the rabbis and Philo: Ginzberg, V, 88-89, Bousset and Gressmann, *Religion*, 363, E. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie*, 3rd ed., Paris, 1950, 121-126, C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, sec. impr., London, 1954, 145-160, and Ch. Kannengiesser, *Philon et les Pères sur la double création de l'homme*, in *Philon d'Alexandrie*, Colloque de Lyon, 11-15 Sept. 1966, Paris, 1967, 277-296. But above all R. A. Baer, Jr., *Philo's use of the catagories of male and female*. (Arb. zur Lit. und Gesch. des hellenist. Judentums, III), Leiden, 1970.

[2] Philo, *De legum allegoriis*, II, 13: προτυπώσας γὰρ τὸν γενικὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐν ᾧ τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ γένος φησὶν εἶναι, ὕστερον τὸ εἶδος ἀπεργάζεται τὸν Ἀδάμ. Baer, 32-33, attempted to demonstrate that the γενικὸς ἄνθρωπος mentioned in this text is not the same as the ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα θεοῦ of *Op. Mund.*, 134, but is probably to be identified with the "generic earthly man" in that text. But in that case what is meant by τὸ εἶδος τὸν Ἀδάμ remains obscure. The current view seems the most likely.

[3] Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 152: ἔρως δ' ἐπιγενόμενος καθάπερ ἑνὸς ζῴου διττὰ τμήματα διεστηκότα συναγαγὼν εἰς ταὐτὸν ἁρμόττεται, πόθον ἐνιδρυσάμενος ἑκατέρῳ τῆς πρὸς θάτερον κοινωνίας εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὁμοίου γένεσιν. *cf*. Baer, 36-38, 87-88.

occurring in the individual who reaches piousness and sanctity. Here it must be kept in mind that in another connection and in contrast to the views just mentioned Philo also considered that before the creation of woman Adam was the true, complete, and therefore perfect human being.[1] This latter conception shows many points of agreement with those of the rabbis. In his *Quaestiones in Exodum* he says that "progress [*sc.* toward piety and worthy holiness] is indeed nothing else than the giving up of the female gender by changing into the male, since the female gender is material, passive, corporeal, and sense-perceptible, while the male is active, rational, incorporeal, and more akin to mind and thought".[2] The same contrast between the spirit as the male and the senses as the female element and the desirability of their reunion is found in the *Quaestiones in Genesim*: "But when just the right time has come for the cleansing and there is a drying up of all ignorance and of all that which is able to do harm, then it is fitting and proper for it [*sc.* the soul] to *bring together* those (elements) which have been *divided and separated*, not that the masculine thought may be made womanish and relaxed by softness, but that the female element, the senses, may be made manly by following masculine thoughts and by receiving from them seed for procreation, that it may perceive (things) with wisdom, prudence, justice and courage, in sum, with virtue".[3]

Despite the psychological categories within which Philo describes the process of sanctification, it is clear that here too there is an echo of the myth of the male-female Adam and the splitting of his being into man and woman as the cause of sinfulness and death. His view that the female element must be made masculine arises from the depreciation of woman that we find in his work.[4] But what he is actually trying to demonstrate is that the liberation of the human being from the world of the senses is marked by the return of the male

[1] See Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques*, 124.

[2] Philo, *Quaest. in Exod.*, I, 8 (trans. from the Armenian by R. Marcus, *Philo. Supplement*, II, London-Cambridge (Loeb), 1953, 15-16).

[3] Philo, *Quaest. in Gen.*, II, 49 (trans. Marcus, *Philo. Supplement*, I, 1953, 130-131).

[4] *Philo. Quaest. in Exod.*, I, 7 (Marcus, II, 14): "*the male is more perfect than the female. Wherefore it is said by the naturalists that the female is nothing else than an imperfect male*'. *Cf.* Baer, 40-44.

and female elements to their original unity, as the text just cited clearly shows.

The conceptions in the *Poimandres* concerning the heaven-descended bisexual Primeval Man, the "Fall", and the origin of the earthly male and female beings, show the influence of the Hellenistic-Jewish interpretation of the first chapters of *Genesis*.[1] In the present connection a detailed discussion of the Hermetic ideas is hardly required, but it is important that the fall of the Heavenly Man was brought about by the kindling of sexual desire for Nature, which tempted him, just as, according to a Jewish interpretation, Adam was seduced by the woman, whom he called "Life".[2] In both cases sexuality is the main feature and the essence of the fall of the Primeval Man, mortality being its consequence. A striking divergence from the Jewish conception is that, according to the *Poimandres*, the progeny resulting from the union of the Primeval Man and Nature were, like the animals, androgynous throughout an entire world period. At the end of this period, God split the people and the animals, so that there were male and female. Then, as in *Genesis*, came the divine command to multiply, albeit with an important addition which, after the foregoing, is hardly surprising: "Increase strongly in numbers and multiply greatly, all that is created, and let man being gifted with reason understand that he is immortal and that *the cause of death is sexual desire*".[3]

The explanation of the Jewish influences on the ideas occurring in the *Poimandres* must be sought in the syncretistic climate prevailing in Alexandria at the beginning of the present era. The groups responsible for the Hermetic literature were susceptible to many influences. The "Hermetics" did not create strictly isolated communities, and had no distinct forms of organization. They held regular meetings attended by like-minded people, and this led to the for-

[1] See C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, 145-169; also Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques*, 125.

[2] *Gen*. iii.20 (LXX): καὶ ἐκάλεσεν 'Αδὰμ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ Ζωή. *Cf*. Ginzberg, V, 124, 133-134.

[3] *Corpus Hermeticum*, I, 18 (Nock-Fest., I, 13): Αὐξάνεσθε ἐν αὐξήσει καὶ πληθύνεσθε ἐν πλήθει πάντα τὰ κτίσματα καὶ δημιουργήματα, καὶ ἀναγνωρισάτω ⟨ὁ⟩ ἔννους ἑαυτὸν ὄντα ἀθάνατον, καὶ τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα, καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα.

mation of what might be called "free communities".[1] Hellenized Jews must have played a role in these communities, and in a city like Alexandria it would have been highly remarkable if this had not been the case.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to attribute the conception of the bisexual Primeval Man entirely to Jewish influences, since we encounter it as early as Plato. In the well-known passage in the *Symposium* in which Aristophanes gives his views on the essence of Eros,[2] he says that there were originally three sexes: the male, the female, and the androgynous. These first people had a round shape and possessed four hands, four feet, and a head with two faces. They were strong and mighty, and rose in rebellion against the gods. The latter did not wish to destroy mankind, however, because they could not do without their sacrifices and worship. Consequently, Zeus decided to humiliate man deeply and thus break his will to rebel: he split man into two halves and commanded Apollo to heal the wounds and form the body as we know it. The navel is the place at which the skin was fastened in a knot.[3] According to this myth, therefore, each human being is only half of his real self, and this is why he has a deep-rooted longing for the re-unification of the original parts of his nature. In love and sexuality this urge to make the two parts into one, the longing to become the undivided, perfect being, reaches its most profound expression.[4] The original existence of three sexes also explains the sexual disposition of the single half-individual: according to his or her original nature, this person has homosexual, lesbian, or heterosexual inclinations.[5]

[1] *Cf.* G. van Moorsel, *The mysteries of Hermes Trismegistus*, Thesis Utrecht, Utrecht, 1955, 128-134, who speaks of "Hermetic conventicles" (129). However, this term leaves too little room for the openness characterizing Alexandrian syncretism.

[2] Plato, *Symposium*, 189a-193e; *cf.* S. Rosen, *Plato's Symposion*, New Haven-London, 1968, 120-158, especially 138-149, and H. Gauss, *Philosophischer Handkommentar zu den Dialogen Platos*, II, 2 Bern, 1958, 89-93.

[3] *Symposium*, 190e; *cf.* Rosen, 146: "*Apollo's needle stitches together man's perpetual incompleteness in accord with the pattern of utility to the gods*'.

[4] *Symposium*, 191a-192e, *cf.* 191c-d: ἔστι δὴ οὖν ἐκ τόσου ὁ ἔρως ἔμφυτος ἀλλήλων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας φύσεως συναγωγεὺς καὶ ἐπιχειρῶν ποιῆσαι ἓν ἐκ δυοῖν καὶ ἰάσασθαι τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην. 192e: τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ διώξει ἔρως ὄνομα.

[5] *Symposium*, 191d-192b.

It is not clear to what extent the concept of the male-female Primeval Man originated with Plato himself. He uses it to explain heterosexual love, just as the undivided male and female primeval people serve to clarify homosexual and lesbian relations. It is quite possible that Plato had become acquainted with the idea of the bisexual Primeval Man from some source or other and, for the sake of his own argumentation, added the male and female Primeval creature. It is in any case striking that we encounter the original occurrence of three sexes only in Plato; for the Rabbis, Philo, and the author of the *Poimandres*, the first human being was exclusively androgynous. We need not consider this question any further here; it will be sufficient in this context to state that it is probable but not certain that the idea of the bisexual Primeval Man may have originated with Plato.[1] But there is no question that his formulation of the idea that love and sexuality are expressions of the split character of man for which man himself is solely responsible, had a far-reaching influence. His myth of the Primeval Man, which he has Aristophanes recount, implies that the original, undivided, and perfect individual did not know sexuality. But Plato does not go as far as the author of the *Poimandres*, who states that sexual desire is responsible for man's mortality.

These conceptions of the Primeval Man do much to clarify the texts on the bisexuality of the phoenix. The foregoing clearly shows that it would be at the very least one-sided to interpret the texts solely as a reflection of Hermetic speculations. When the *Untitled Gnostic treatise* calls the phoenix that lives a thousand years a symbol of the androgynous Adam in Paradise, the influence of Jewish ideas is clearly discernible.[2] The explanation of what Lactantius and Zeno have to say about the sex of the phoenix must be sought in a

[1] It is remarkable that in his *De vita contemplativa*, 63, Philo speaks rather critically of the myth in Plato, even though he seems to have made use of it in *De opificio mundi*, 152. A direct influence of Plato on Philo is denied by Ginzberg, V, 88, Bousset and Gressmann, *Religion*, 353, Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiuqes*, 125, and Baer, 87-88.

[2] For the Jewish influence on this work, see the commentary in the edition of Böhlig-Labib, and A. Böhlig, *Mysterion und Wahrheit. Gesammelte Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*, (Arbeite zur Geschichte des späteren Judentums und des Urchristentums, VI), Leiden, 1968, 119-122.

remarkable Early Christian development of the conceptions discussed above.

It must be kept in mind here that according to Judaeo-Christian thinking, primeval time will be repeated at the end of the world; the conditions prevailing before the Fall and exclusion from Paradise will recur in the City of God of the eschaton. That the phoenix was the symbolic expression of this conception was shown in our elucidation of its abode and its food.[1] It is within this context that the remarks of Lactantius and Zeno of Verona on the sex of the phoenix must be placed.

The factors discussed above led to the obvious conclusion that, like Adam before the Fall, the redeemed in the eschatological glory would be elevated above sexuality. Grounds for this idea were present in words spoken by Jesus himself: "At the resurrection men and women do not marry; they are like angels in heaven" (*Matt.* xxii.30).[2] The angels were sexless;[3] but it is of minor importance whether the resurrected body is considered to have both sexes or to be sexless. The main point is that in the life after resurrection, sexuality will no longer play any role whatsoever.

This is clear from the comments on the phoenix in Zeno of Verona's treatise *De resurrectione*. In his opinion, this bird instructs us clearly about the precious privileges of the resurrection: it does not derive the nobility of its kind from its parents and does not pass it on to his children; for itself it is both sexes, it is itself every affection, it is itself its own offspring, its own end and beginning, it is not born of a sexual union.[4] The bisexual phoenix is here a symbol of eschatological man arisen from the dead, for whom male and female coincide, and who has had returned to him his original, perfect unity. Zeno is concerned here with the question of the reality of the bodily

[1] See p. 319-332 and 348-356.

[2] Also in *Mark* xii.25; for the deviant version in *Luke*, xx.34-36, see p. 376 and p. 377, n. 2.

[3] See J. Michl, *Engel*, in *RAC*, V, 1962, 85 (rabbis) and 122 (Christians).

[4] Zeno of Verona, *Tract.*, I, 16, 9, (*PL* 11, 381A): *Similiter phoenix avis illa pretiosa resurrectionis evidenter nos edocet jura, quae nobilitatem generis sui non a parentibus accepit, non liberis tradit: ipsa est sibi uterque sexus, ipsa omnis affectus, ipsa genus, ipsa finis, ipsa principium: non ex coitu nascitur, nec officio alieno nutritur.*

resurrection, and says emphatically that the resurrected phoenix is not a shade but reality, not an image but the phoenix itself, not another but, although a better one, the former phoenix itself.[1] This is unmistakably meant as a refutation of a view which, out of repugnance for the corporeal, attempted to spiritualize the resurrection. It seems likely that Zeno had in mind here the eschatology of Origen and the Origenists.[2]

In this polemic against the spiritualization of the resurrection of the flesh it was also possible to reach an entirely different interpretation of the word of Jesus: it was strenuously argued that the resurrected retained their earthly sex unchanged. This was repeatedly stated by Jerome in his anti-Origenist writings. For him, the retention of the sexual characteristics at the resurrection of the dead was one of the keystones of orthodoxy on this point.[3] The promise that we shall be as the angels implied, in his opinion, that in our flesh and our sex we shall be endowed with the bliss enjoyed by the angels lacking flesh and sex.[4] Yet he was certain that at the resurrection the redeemed would be above sexuality. This, after all, is something the true believer already strives for in his earthly life. In this context Jerome argues, against John of Jerusalem, that there need be no fear of a marriage between those who before death lived in their sex without the works of sex. The resurrection of parts of the body that will no longer fulfill their function must not be considered superfluous, since even in this life we make every

[1] *Ibid.; non umbra, sed veritas, non imago, sed phoenix, non alia, sed quamvis melior alia, tamen prior ipsa!*

[2] *Cf.* for the eschatology of Origen, the Origenists, and the anti-Origenists: J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian doctrines*, 3rd ed., London, 1965, 469-479; for the first phase of the Origenistic controversy: B. J. Kidd, *A history of the Church to A.D. 461*, II, Oxford, 1922, 429-439.

[3] *Cf.* J. P. O'Connell, *The eschatology of Saint Jerome*, (Dissertationes ad Lauream, 16), Mundelein, 1948, 48-52. Tertullian already mentioned this view as defence for the reality of the resurrection, *cf. Adversus Valentinianos*, 32, 5: *Et tamen homo sum Demiurgi; illuc habeo devertere post excessum, ubi omnino non nubitur, ubi superindui potius quam despolari* ⟨*habeo* ,⟩ *ubi, etsi despolior, sexui meo deputor, angelis non angelus, non angela. Nemo mihi quicquam faciet, quem et tunc masculum invenient.*

[4] Jerome *Contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum*, 31 (*PL* 23, 383B): *Angelorum nobis similitudo promittitur, id est, beatitudo illa, in qua sine carne et sexu sunt Angeli, nobis in carne et sexu nostro donabitur.*

effort to prevent those parts of the body from fulfilling their function.[1]

With this argumentation Jerome draws attention to the fact that in Christian virginity an important aspect of the eschatological state is realized. This view must be examined more closely, because in our opinion Lactantius' statements about the sex of the phoenix must be primarily interpreted in this sense.

For this purpose, we can best start with the concept of virginity held by the so-called Encratites, by which we refer in particular not to the sect in Asia Minor that used this name in the fourth century but rather to the representatives of a broad movement in the Early Church whose roots are to be traced to the time of the New Testament.[2] The Encratites held that sexual continence was not only useful or desirable but necessary.

For the Encratites too, Jesus' words about reaching the state of the angels had great importance, especially in the formulation in Luke: "The men and women of this world marry; but those who have been judged worthy of a place in the other world and of the resurrection from the dead, do not marry, for they are not subject to death any longer. They are like angels; they are sons of God, because they share in the resurrection" (*Luke* xx.34-36). Marriage is intended for the propagation of the human race; when death has been defeated, therefore, marriage will no longer have any function. According to Clement of Alexandria, the Encratites were of the opinion that the resurrection of the dead had become a fact with Christ's resurrection and that the new world had already arrived; since they already belonged to this world, they rejected marriage.[3]

[1] *Ibid.* (383AB): *Noli timere eorum nuptias, qui etiam ante mortem in sexu suo sine sexus opere vixerunt ... Nec statim superflua videbitur membrorum resurrectio, quae caritura sint officio suo, cum adhuc in hac vita positi, nitamur opera non implere membrorum. Cf.* also his *Comm. in Epist. ad Ephes.*, III, 5, 29 (*PL* 26, 534A), where, however, the retention of the distinction between the sexes after the resurrection is not discussed.

[2] *Cf.* H. Chadwick, *Enkrateia*, in *RAC*, V, 1962, 343-365; G. Quispel, *L'Evangile selon Thomas et les origines de l'ascèse chrétienne*, in *Aspects du Judéo-christianisme*, Colloque de Strasbourg, 23-25 avril 1964, Paris, 1965, 35-52, and *idem*, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle*, (Suppl. to *Novum Testamentum*, XV), Leiden, 1967, 82-106.

[3] Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, III, 48, 1: εἰ γοῦν τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἀπειλήφασιν, ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀθετοῦσι τὸν γάμον.

One of their most important spokesmen, Julius Cassianus, said, with an allusion to *Luke* xx.34ff.: "Those who are governed by wordly forces beget children and are born, but we are citizens of a Kingdom in heaven, whence we await the Redeemer" (comp. *Phil* iii.20).[1]

One of the sources on which Cassianus based himself was the *Gospel according to the Egyptians*, which shows strong Encratite influence. In this Gospel, when Salome asked, "How long will man continue to die?", Jesus answered, "As long as women bring forth children".[2]

In the conceptions of the Encratites a marked role was played by the above-discussed ideas about the original unity of mankind, sexuality as the primeval sin and as the reason for death, and redemption from the world of the senses through re-unification of the male and female elements. In Alexandria this would have been almost unavoidable.

This development is already indicated by the rest of the conversation between Jesus and Salome in the *Gospel according to the Egyptians* as reported by Cassianus. Salome asks what sign will show that death has lost its power, and Jesus replies, "When you trample on the garment of shame, and when the two become one and the male with the female is neither male nor female".[3]

[1] Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, III, 95, 2.

[2] Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, III, 45, 3: μέχρι πότε θάνατος ἰσχύσει; ... μέχρις ἄν, εἶπεν, ὑμεῖς αἱ γυναῖκες τίκτητε and III, 64, 1: μέχρι τίνος οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποθανοῦνται; ... μέχρις ἄν τίκτωσιν αἱ γυναῖκες. *Cf.* Quispel, *Makarius*, 82-83, who compares these texts with *Luke* xx.34-36, according to the *Codex Bezae* and the Old Syriac translation, resp. γεννῶνται καὶ γεννῶσι and, translated back into Greek, τίκτουσι καὶ γεννῶσιν. A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 3rd impr., London, 1938, 322, sees in Luke's version "*an explanatory paraphrase heard from the lips of a Jewish-Christian preacher. It introduces the new thought that when there is no death, marriage for the propagation of the race will be unnecessary*". For the Jewish and Judaeo-Christian backgrounds to be assumed for the Early Christian asceticism, see, in addition to the studies by Quispel mentioned above, the contribution of M. Black, *The tradition of Hasidaean-Essene asceticism: its origins and influence*, in *Aspects du Judéo-christianisme*, 19-33, and Peterson, *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis*, Fribourg i. Br., 1959, 209-235.

[3] Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, III, 92, 2: ὅταν τὸ τῆς αἰσχύνης ἔνδυμα πατήσητε καὶ ὅταν γένηται τὰ δύο ἓν καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν μετὰ τῆς θηλείας οὔτε ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ.

The "garment of shame" refers to the animal skins with which *Gen.* iii. 22 says God covered the first people. Philo had explained this as an indication of the body, and was followed in this by Cassianus and also by Origen.[1] This interpretation involves the assumption that before the Fall man was a purely spiritual being, which in turn is related to the Platonic view that the body is the clothing of the soul.[2] It is highly probable that the *Gospel according to the Egyptians* too is based on this view. But even when the bodily resurrection was not relinquished, it could in any case be read in this Gospel that entrance into the eschatological Paradise consists of conquering sexuality, of a return to the childlike innocence belonging to the time before the Fall. This is the sense in which the statement attributed to Jesus is taken in the *Gospel according to Thomas*: "His disciples said: "When wilt Thou be revealed to us and when will we see Thee?". Jesus said: "When you take off your clothing without being ashamed, and take your clothes and put them under your feet, as the little children, and tread on them, then shall you behold the Son of the Living One and you shall not fear" (*log.* 37).[3]

This interpretation of the word about the "garment of shame" is linked in "Thomas" with the statement concerning the abolition of the distinction between the sexes. This indicates that for him, too, the two statements belonged together. "They said to him: "Shall we then, being children, enter the Kingdom?" Jesus said to them: "When you make the two one...and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female not be female...then shall you enter the Kingdom"" (*log.* 22).

Various Encratite texts carry the suggestion that in these groups the woman was considered a reprehensible creature because she was

[1] Philo, *De posteritate Caini*, 137, and *De legum allegoriis*, III, 69; for Julius Cassianus see Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, III, 95, 2 (these texts mentioned by Quispel, *Makarius*, 53), Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 40 (*Cf.* Ginzberg, V, 103 and M. Simonetti, *Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi, 2, 7 e 3, 21* in *Aevum*, 36, 1962, 370-381).

[2] See Quispel, *Makarius*, 53.

[3] Cited from the edition of A. Guillaumont, H.-Ch. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till and Yassah 'Abd al Masīḥ, *The Gospel according to Thomas*, Leiden-London, 1959.

responsible for the entry of sin and death into the world. This is related to the conception of the female as the sensorial and sensual element, which is also found in Philo. In the *Gospel according to the Egyptians*, thus, Jesus says, "I came to destroy the works of the female".[1] But it is clear from the *Gospel according to Thomas* that this does not necessarily mean that women as such were considered unsuitable for the Kingdom of God, although it is also evident that some held this opinion. At Simon Peter's request that Mary be sent away because women are not worthy of the Life, Jesus replies: "See, I shall lead her, so that I shall make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (*log.* 114).[2]

We must not allow ourselves to be misled by this historically explicable choice of words. The Encratites rejected marriage, but they did not reject womankind. For them, Christianity was not a religion for men; quite to the contrary, they taught the elevation of woman. They did not consider the woman to be a lower order of being whose main function was to satisfy the appetites of the man and to serve his comfort. They gave an ascetic twist to Paul's statement that in Christ there is neither male nor female (*Gal.* iii.28). This explains why in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles it is the women who are moved by the essentially Encratite preaching. In the life of the resurrection there is no longer any distinction between man and woman, the two have become one, Paradise is regained.

The theme of the original unity of man could in itself lead to a positive evaluation of marriage.[3] In Encratism, it became an as-

[1] Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, III, 63, 2: ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὰ ἔργα τῆς θηλείας.

[2] See H.-Ch. Puech in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, I, 216, 219. *Cf.* also Tertullian, *De cultu femin.*, I, 2,5: the female is granted *idem sexus qui et viris* (other opinion on p. 375, in n. 3); *Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, 10, 3: *et facta sum masculus* (Perpetua, in a vision of her last battle with and victory over the Evil One): Pseudo-Athanasius, *De virginitate*, 10 (ed. H. Koch, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Askese und des Mönchtums in der alten Kirche*, Tübingen, 1933, 52): ἀπόθου τὸ γυναικεῖον φρόνημα καὶ λάβε θάρσος καὶ ἀνδρείαν (*cf.* Philo above, p. 370)· ἐν γὰρ "τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ", ἀλλὰ πᾶσαι αἱ εὐαρεστήσασαι γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν τάξιν λαμβάνουσιν.

[3] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, I, 10, gives an impressive description of the unity of man and woman as product of the one *Logos*: they are

cetic motif. The *Gospel according to Thomas* has Jesus say this repeatedly: "Blessed are the solitary (μοναχός) and the elect, for"—and now the word suddenly becomes personal—"you shall find the Kingdom; because you come from it and you shall go there again" (*Log.* 49), and "Many are standing at the door, but the solitary (μοναχός) are the ones who will enter the bridal chamber" (*log.* 75).[1]

Here the word μοναχός cannot be translated as "monk". The *Gospel according to Thomas* was written, probably around A.D. 140, in Edessa in Syria.[2] Extensive research has made it highly probable that the word μοναχός is the Greek equivalent of the Syriac *iḥidaya*, which corresponds to the Hebrew *yaḥid*, "only", "single", "solitary", "living alone".[3] In Syria this word became a *terminus technicus* for the *virgo*, the single one dedicated to God who has forsworn marriage and sexuality because they belong to the world of death from which he has been redeemed. Virginity was highly esteemed in Syria: over a very long period baptism was only permissible for virgins.[4]

We need not go into this subject any further, except to mention that the Hebrew *yaḥid* could also be translated as μονογενής and

identical in all respects, ὧν δὲ κοινὸς μὲν ὁ βίος, κοινὴ δὲ ἡ χάρις, κοινὴ δὲ καὶ ἡ σωτηρία. That he meant here the unity attained by marriage is evident from his remark concerning the abolition of sexuality in the resurrection (with reference to Luke xx.34-36): ἔνθα τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ καὶ ἁγίου τούτου βίου τοῦ ἐκ συζυγίας τὰ ἔπαθλα οὐκ ἄρρενι καὶ θηλείᾳ, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ ἀπόκειται ἐπιθυμίας διχαζούσης αὐτὸν κεχωρισμένῳ. Waszink, *De anima*, (see p. 362, n. 3), 420, cites this text unjustifiably as evidence respecting the concept of the a-sexuality of the soul. *Cf.* also *Strom.*, III, 68, 1 on the two or three gathered in Christ's name (*Matth.*, xviii.20): does not Christ mean by this man, woman and child, ὅτι ἀνδρὶ γυνὴ διὰ θεοῦ ἁρμόζεται. On the basis of bisexual unity of the primeval principle the Valentinians too arrived at the acceptance of marriage, *cf.* Clement, *Strom.*, III, 1, 1, and M. Malinine, H. Ch. Puech, G. Quispel and W. Till, *De resurrectione (Epistula ad Rheginum)*, Zurich-Stuttgart, 1963, XI.

[1] *Cf.* also *Log.* 4, 16, 23.

[2] *Cf.* Quispel, *Makarius*, 106-111.

[3] M. Harl, *A propos des Logia de Jésus : le sens du mot* Μοναχός, in *REG*, 73, 1960, 464-474; A. F. J. Klijn, *The "Single One" in the Gospel of Thomas*, in *Journ. of Bibl. Literature*, 81, 1962, 271-278; Quispel, *L'Évangile selon Thomas*, (see p. 376, n. 2), 37-41; A. Guillaumont, *Le nom des "Agapètes"*, in *VC* 23, 1969, 34-36.

[4] A. Vööbus, *History of asceticism in the Syrian Orient* ,I, Louvain, 1958, 3-10. In all probability, the above-cited *log.* 75 of the *Gospel according to Thomas* also concerns the admission to baptism.

ἀγαπητός, as a result of which these words take on a meaning roughly the same as that of μοναχός.[1] It is conceivable that when the phoenix is called μονογενής, this was also meant to convey its elevation above sexuality.[2] Another word which is interesting in this connection is ἀγαπητός, meaning "beloved". This word was used in the Early Church to indicate those women, called *virgines subintroductae,* who were taken by pious ascetics into their homes to be united with them in a spiritual marriage.[3] In the Early Church and long afterward, this practice was sharply criticized.[4] There can be no doubt, however, that in its pure form it was a meaningful ascetic expression of the idea that man and woman belong together, that it is not good for them to be alone (*Gen.* ii.18).[5] This custom meant that man and woman lived together like Adam and Eve in Paradise before the Fall and thus realized the eschaton in their earthly existence. In this spiritual marriage the essential identity of man and woman and the awareness of their mutual dependence have attained the highest form possible under ascetic conditions.

It was necessary here to discuss the ascetic motif of the true, male-female individual because of its great importance for the interpretation of *De ave phoenice.* In our opinion, in this work the phoenix is primarily a symbol of the Early Christian *virgo.* It has been assumed by some authors that in Lactantius the bird is a symbol of Christ, but this is hardly likely because essential elements of the phoenix-Christ symbolism do not occur in his poem.[6] There is more

[1] *Cf.* Guillaumont, *Le nom des Agapètes,* 33-34.

[2] See p. 358.

[3] H. Achelis, *Virgines subintroductae. Ein Beitrag zu I Kor. VII,* Leipzig, 1902; for the explanation of the name ἀγαπητή, see Guillaumont, *o.c.,* 30-37.

[4] In the Irish Church the *subintroductae* still occurred in the 12th century, *cf.* R. E. Reynolds, *Virgines subintroductae in Celtic Christianity,* in *Harvard theol. rev.,* 61, 1968, 547-566.

[5] *Cf.* Reynolds, *o.c.,* 564-565.

[6] *Cf.* F. J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis,* (Liturgiegesch. Forsch., 4/5), Munster, 1925, 168: "*Mir ist es klar, dass die geheimnisvolle Symbolik auf Christus abzielt, der vom Osten, vom Paradies kommt, in dem Lande, wo der Tod herrscht, hier Syrien, den Tod findet, dann nach Aegypten, hier wohl das Reich des Hades, hinabsteigt und dann in das Paradies zurückkehrt*" (similarly Quasten, *Patrology,* II, 404). But it must be remarked here that we find the phoenix related to Christ only in texts clearly bearing the influence of the *Physiologus.*

justification for the assumption that here the phoenix is the symbol of eschatological man who via death has won life in the heavenly Paradise. This was indeed the most common symbolism of the phoenix is the Early Church.[1] The fact that Zeno of Verona used the phoenix in this sense and that his choice of words in speaking of the bird's sex clearly show the influence of *De ave phoenice*,[2] need not mean that it was also Lactantius' intention to create primarily or exclusively a picture of life after the resurrection. It is certainly possible to interpret Lactantius' poem in this sense, but we must not forget that the idea of the realized eschatology implies that the conditions of the final period are already manifest in the present, and that it is therefore not always clear in just which sense the images and symbols must be understood. It seems probable that in *De ave phoenice* the conceptions of the eschatological future and the eschatological present both occur, so that it is not always clear which is meant. Nevertheless, we are prepared to defend the thesis that Lactantius was concerned in the first place with the eschatological Paradise that the *virgo* brought to realization in his earthly life. Several arguments can be put forward to support this view.

In both Zeno of Verona and Lactantius the phoenix is above sex-

And in these cases it is always explicitly stated that the phoenix does not live again until three days after its death, which is not found in Lactantius. Dölger's argumentation could equally well be applied to many other Early Christian texts on the phoenix where, however, the same facts are related to the resurrection of the flesh.

[1] Thus *1 Clem.*, 25-26; Tertullian, *De resurr. mort.*, 13; *Didascalia*, 40; *Const. Apost.*, V, 7, 15-17; Commodianus, *Carmen apolog.*, 139-142; Ambrose, *Exameron*, V, 23, 79-80; *idem*, *De excessu frat.*, II, 59; Zeno of Verona, *Tract.*, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 381A); Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, XVIII, 8 (*PG* 33, 1028A); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.*, XXXI, 10, (*PG* 36, 144C) *idem*, *Carmina*, I, 2: *Praecepta ad virgines*, 526-530 (*PG* 37, 620A); Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84; Augustine, *De anima et eius origine*, IV, 20, 33; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, I, 15; Dracontius, *De laudibus Dei*, I, 653-655; Pseudo-Cyprianus, *Ad Flav. Felic.*, 130-134; Pseudo-Ambrose, *De Trinitate*, 34, (*PL* 17, 545AB); *Passio S. Caeciliae*, ed. Mombritius, 339; Ennodius, *Carmina*, I, 9, 151; Symphosius, *Aenigmata*, 31 (*cf. CIL*, XIV, 113, no. 914); Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stell. ratio*, 12; Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, (*PG* 85, 980A-B); Pseudo-Bede, *Expos. in Job.*, II, 12; Rabanus Maurus, *De universo*, 8, 6 (*PL* 111, 246B).

[2] *Cf.* texts mentioned in n. 2 on p. 365, in n. 4 on p. 374, and in n. 1 on p. 375, and Weymann's article mentioned on p. 366, in n. 1.

uality, but there are distinct differences in emphasis between these two authors. Zeno stresses the fact that the bird is totally one and single, sufficient to itself and dependent on no one: for itself it is both sexes simultaneously, it is itself its own beginning and end, and for the continuation of its existence it does not have to rely on a sexual union.[1] In its life, as in that of the resurrected, sexuality no longer plays a role, having lost its meaning because death has been defeated. Lactantius, however, portrays this state not as an unassailable fact but as a desirable and praiseworthy condition. He says that the bird is fortunate because it has no ties of any kind with Venus; death is its Venus, and in this lies its only passion, it longs to die so that it can be reborn.[2] In this text the objectionable aspect of sexuality is put into words on the one hand and on the other the idea that new life can only be acquired by undergoing death. Here, Lactantius must have had in mind the earthly individual for whom sexuality forms a threat that only disappears after death. If he had thought only of the life starting with the eschatological resurrection of the dead, he would certainly have chosen his words differently.

Lactantius does not go into the question of whether the phoenix was male or female, neither, or both at the same time.[3] In his words we hear a reverberation of the above-discussed ideas about the asexuality or bisexuality of the perfect individual who has either known or has overcome the split in himself. This idea could have been very familiar to Lactantius. He could have encountered it in the Hermetic literature, which he knew well and which even had a profound influence on his thinking,[4] but it is more probable that he became acquainted with this conception in its Christian, Encratite form as it is to be found in the *Gospel according to the Egyptians* and the *Gospel according to Thomas*. This conclusion is forced on us by his discussion of marriage and virginity in the *Divinae Institutiones*.

[1] See p. 374, n. 4.
[2] See p. 365, n. 2.
[3] vs.163, see p. 365, n. 3 and 4.
[4] See A. Wlosok, *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis. Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Terminologie der gnostischen Erlösungsvorstellung* (Abh. Heidelb. Akad. d. Wiss., Philos.-hist. Klasse, Jrg. 1960, 2), Heidelberg, 1960.

It must be stated first of all that Lactantius himself was certainly not an Encratite. He saw marriage as a sacred institution whose purpose was to guarantee the continuation of the human race. He assumes that sexual desire is more intense in man than in other living creatures either because God wished for more people or because He had bestowed the quality of virtue only on mankind so that praise and glory could be earned by controlling of the passions and by continence.[1] It must not be thought, Lactantius says, that it is difficult to keep sensuality under control: the prospect of overcoming it has been given to mankind, and very many have *preserved* the blessed and uncorrupted integrity of the body and have fully enjoyed this *heavenly* form of living.[2] It is evident from this passage that for Lactantius, too, virginity was an aspect of the eschatological return to Paradise. He remarks with emphasis that God does not compel mankind to maintain this state but rather leaves them the freedom to do so, because He knowns just how strong a compulsion he has attached to these feelings.[3] Continence is, however, the most ideal state, and Lactantius confirms this by quoting a statement by God or Jesus not found in the Bible: "He says, "If a man has been able to do this, he shall receive an excellent and incomparable reward" ". Such a man shall conquer the earth, he shall be the equal of God, because he has acquired the virtue of God.[4] The *virgo* becomes like Adam in Paradise, who was created in the image of God.

In view of these conceptions, no objection can be made to the interpretation that in Lactantius the phoenix is not primarily a symbol of the resurrected in the eschatological Paradise but rather of the Early Christian *virgo*, who realizes the eschaton in his earthly existence. We have seen at various other places in *De ave phoenice*

[1] Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, VI, 23, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, VI, 23, 37: *Nec vero aliquis existimet difficile esse frenos imponere voluptati ... cum propositum sit hominibus eam vincere ac plurimi beatam atque incorruptam corporis integritatem retinuerint multique sint qui hoc caelesti genere vitae felicissime perfruantur.*

[3] *Ibid.*, VI, 23, 38.

[4] *Ibid.*, VI, 23, 38: *Sic quis hoc inquit facere potuerit, habebit eximiam incomparabilemque mercedem* ... 39. *Hic terram triumphabit, hic erit consimilis deo qui virtutem dei cepit.*

as well that only an interpretation related to the life before death is possible. We recall the threefold or fourfold submergence of the phoenix, which can be an indication of baptism; its daily prayers; and the heavenly food taken by the young bird, which can be related to the sacraments.[1] The *virgo* already practices in this life the *vita angelica*: in baptism he has received a new life, death can no longer touch him, and therefore the sexual distinction has lost its meaning for him. He has entered Paradise; for him the future has become the present. But for the *virgo* this *vita angelica* is not yet assured; to the contrary, it must be striven for daily in mortification and under continual prayer.[2] The greatest threat to this paradisial state lays in sexuality, the exclusion of which was the constant preoccupation of the Early Christian ascetics. This is the sense in which Lactantius' statements about the sex of the phoenix and the absence of any connection with Venus must be interpreted.

That the phoenix was seen in Encratite groups as a symbol of the *virgo* is clearly shown by the *Epistle of Pseudo-Titus*, which is devoted solely to a defence of virginity and an attack on the spiritual marriage.[3] The writer of this letter shows himself to be a convinced advocate of the ideas of Encratism; for him, the primeval sin is sexuality, Adam fell when a woman smiled at him.[4] With a reference to the apocryphal *Acts of John*, marriage is characterized as "instruction in division", "desire for a delusion", "beginning of disobedience, end of life, and death".[5] This also holds for the spiritual marriage: the ascetic who takes a woman into his house finds death in love.[6] The writer points out that the heavenly Jerusalem is built by the devote solitaries. In this city, in accordance with the word of Christ, they will not marry or be taken in marriage but be as the

[1] See p. 282-284, 324, n. 4, 356.

[2] See texts mentioned by U. Ranke-Heinemann, *Zum Ideal der vita angelica im frühen Mönchtum* in *Geist und Leben*, 29, 1956, 347-357, and also G. M. Colombas *Paradis et vie angélique*, Paris, 1961, *passim*.

[3] Text published by D. de Bruyne in *Revue Bénédictine* 37, 1925, 47-72, and translated by A. de Santos Otero, in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, II, 90-109 (with introduction and bibliography). The Latin in this work can only be called barbarian.

[4] Hennecke and Schneemelcher, II, 97.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 104.

[6] *Ibid.*, II, 95.

angles in heaven. He then exclaims: "O man, who understands nothing of the fruits of righteousness, why did the Lord create the divine phoenix and not join to it a female companion but commanded it to remain solitary? This has become openly known especially to demonstrate the virgin condition to the young, namely, that the saints must remain without any alliance with a woman".[1]

It seems probable that for the comparison of the *virgo* with the phoenix both Lactantius and Pseudo-Titus drew on an ascetic tradition. In a slightly different form we find the same comparison in Greek in the *Praecepta ad Virgines* by Gregory of Nazianzus. Speaking of examples of virginity and chastity in the animal world, this author names the phoenix first of all: just as the dying phoenix renews itself by bringing forth a self-begotten offspring in fire, so too are the dying always-living when they are consumed by the fiery longing for Christ.[2] Here, Gregory gives an ascetic turn to the familiar resurrection symbolism of the phoenix. The phoenix attains a new life in an asexual manner by burning itself up, it is αὐτογένεθλος. In the same way the Christian who is consumed by a burning desire for Christ acquires eternal life, and thus for him too sexuality loses its importance. Gregory does not say the latter in so many words, but it is clear that this is what he means from the rhetorical question with which he concludes the passage on the phoenix: "Who understanding this could fail to join the unmarried with joy, since a better passion will set him on fire?" [3]

Ambrose too mentioned the phoenix in a discussion of chastity

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 100; ed. De Bruyne, 56 (l. 336-341): *Homo qui non intellegis iusticiae fructus, ut quid divinum autem disposuit dominus phoenicem, nec alteram sibi foeminam conparem iunxit sed singularem permanere iussit? Utique palam innotuit ut ostendat spadonis statum iuventutis sine femine coniunccione perma⟨ne⟩re sanctos. Denique pro hunc autem anastasem vita declaratur* (*iuventutis* should probably be read as *iuventuti*). In the last sentence a connection is drawn, as in Gregory of Nazianzus (see below), between virginity and resurrection, *cf.* De Santos Otero's translation: "*Und seine Auferstehung weist schliesslich auf das Leben hin*".

[2] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina*, I, 2: *Praecepta ad virgines*, 526-530 (*PG* 37, 620A): "Ὡς δ᾽ ὄρνιν φοίνικα φάτις θνήσκοντα νεάζειν / ἐν πυρὶ τικτόμενον, πολλῶν ἐτεῶν μετὰ κύκλα, / γηραλέης κονίας ξεῖνον γόνον αὐτογένεθλον, / ὣς οἵ γε θνήσκοντες ἀείζωοι τελέθουσι, / δαιόμενοι πυρόεντι πόθῳ Χριστοῦ βασιλῆος.

[3] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina*, I, 2, 532-533: Ταῦτα τίς εἰσορόων, οὐ σπένδεται ἠϊθέοισι / γηθόσυνος σαρκεσσιν, ἐπεὶ ζέσεν οἶστρος ἀρείων;

and virginity: the bird knows neither sexual intercourse nor the temptations of sexual desire; it rises again from its own pyre, it survives itself, and is itself both the heir of its body and the fruit of its ashes.[1] It is possible that Ambrose's choice of words in this passage betrays the influence of Lactantius,[2] but there is a distinct agreement with Gregory of Nazianzus. Both include among the examples offered by nature not only the phoenix, which serves as a model for the *virgo*, but also the turtle dove, which remains celibate if it loses its mate.[3] This bird serves as an example of the complete chastity that should be maintained by a widow or a widower. It is improbable that Ambrose drew on Gregory, so it must be assumed that both used an existing ascetic tradition.[4] However this may have been, it is by now clear that the phoenix played a role, as symbol of the *virgo*, in ascetic thinking. It is highly improbable that Lactantius, who refers to this symbolism only in veiled terms, could have been its originator. In this respect too he must have been dependent on older sources.

Lastly, attention must be given in this connection to a possible explanation of the name "phoenix" put forward by Isidore of Seville: the bird could have been given this name because in the entire world it is *unica et singularis*. "For", he says, "the Arabs call someone who is *singularis* "phoenix" ".[5] This recalls the familiar Classical comparison of the rare, exceptional individual with the phoenix.[6] It is in itself possible that Isidore assumed that a similar comparison was also common in the native land of the phoenix. But it is equally possible that the virginity symbolism of the phoenix is involved

[1] Ambrose, *Expos. Psalmi cxviii*, 19, 13: *Phoenix coitus corporeos ignorat, libidinis nescit inlecebras, sed de suo resurgit rogo, sibi avis superstes, ipsa et sui heres corporis et cineris sui fetus.*

[2] *Cf.* Lactantius, 167-168 (p. 365, n. 2), but also Claudian, *Phoenix*, 101: *O felix heresque tui.*

[3] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina*, I, 2, 535-539 (*PG* 37, 620A), and Ambrose, *Expos. Psalmi cxviii*, 19, 13.

[4] Ambrose wrote his *Expositio Psalmi cxviii* between 386 and 388, *cf.* the edition of Petschenig, VI. Gregory wrote his poems in his last years, between 384 and 389; see Quasten, *Patrology*, III, 238, 244.

[5] Isidore, *Etymol.*, XII, 7, 22: *Phoenix Arabiae avis, dicta quod colorem phoeniceum habeat, vel quod sit in toto orbe singularis et unica. Nam Arabes singularem "phoenicem" vocant.*

[6] See p. 67, n. 1, 71, n. 1 and 2.

here. The *virgo*, who raised himself above sexuality, could be called pre-eminently *singularis*.[1] This word was also used by Pseudo-Titus, who says that God commanded the bird to remain *singularis*. Since it is as good as certain that this work of Pseudo-Titus originated in Spanish ascetic circles,[2] it cannot be excluded that Isidore knew the comparison of the *virgo* with the phoenix. It is conceivable that he thought that this comparison, which probably originated in the East, was also current in the country of the phoenix.

The phoenix also occurs as a symbol of virginity in Early Christian art. In the apse of S. Agnese fuori le Mura in Rome, the bird occurs in a medallion on the robe of St. Agnes.[3] This saint died the death of a martyr at the age of twelve, during the reign of Diocletian, and has become the model of the Roman virgins, as shown, for instance, by several liturgical texts.[4] Here, the phoenix could be a symbol of life in the heavenly Paradise that became her share, but in that case we would expect to see it on the palm tree, as is the case, for instance, in SS. Cosma e Damiano. This makes it more likely that in S. Agnese it serves as the symbol of virginity. This is also indicated by the unusual place in which it occurs: on the robe of the "pure" Agnes. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that similar birds also occur on the garment of the archangels shown on the triumphal arch of S. Apollinare in Classe.[5] The holy Agnes, who never knew sexuality, was "as the angels in heaven" even before her death.

The few references to the sex of the phoenix to be found in the Classical and Early Christian sources have led to a lengthy discussion. We have found that the actual asexuality with which the bird was endowed from ancient times on the basis of its unusual genesis, was elevated to an essential characteristic within the framework of

[1] *Cf.* A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des auteurs chrétiens*, Turnhout, 1954, 762, s.v. *singularis*, 2; *singularitas*, 4; and *singulariter*, 3.

[2] See De Santos Otero, in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, II, 90-91 and Quasten, *Patrology*, I, 156-157.

[3] See pl. XXXIV, 1.

[4] P. Allard, *Agnès*, in *DACL*, I, 1907, 905-918; L. Kennedy, *The Saints of the Canon of the Mass*, (Studi di Antichità, 14), Città del Vaticano, 1938, 173-177.

[5] See pl. XXXIV, 2.

various conceptions. It proved to make little difference whether it was described as asexual or bisexual, because in either case the point was to indicate that it was above sexuality. The bisexuality of the phoenix is referred to primarily in connection with the idea of the true, perfect human being in whom the male and the female elements have recovered their original unity. The statements on the sex of the phoenix are all determined by the symbolism of the bird, and thus we see again that its myth cannot be studied apart from the interpretations it has been given.

PART THREE

RESULTS

CHAPTER XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MYTH OF THE PHOENIX SOME CONCLUSIONS

Several scholars have attempted to arrange the multifarious phoenix traditions found in Classical and Early Christian literature in such a way as to reveal a distinct line of development.[1] On the basis of our analysis of the phoenix myth we have made a similar attempt, drawing a sharp distinction between probabilities and demonstrable facts. But before giving our results, some remarks must be made on the dating of our sources and the way in which the phoenix is spoken of in them. These points would seem to be self-evident, but one often finds that they are not taken into account.

In the first century A.D. the phoenix is mentioned twenty-one times by ten authors.[2] From the preceding eight centuries we have

[1] In the notes to this chapter attention is given mainly to the views of Fitzpatrick, 18-27, Sbordone, *La fenice*, 1-31, Rusch, 416-421, and Walla, 51-52, 62-81. Hubaux and Leroy did not consider the development of the myth to any extent, but see below, p. 407, n. 2; following Sbordone, they overstress the derivation from Egyptian conceptions concerning the *benu*, see p. 30.

[2] Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 392-407, *Amor.*, II 6, 54; Cornelius Valerianus in Pliny, X, 5; Lucan, VI, 680; Martial, *Epigr.*, V, 7, 1-4; V, 37, 13; VI, 55, 2; Pomp. Mela, III, 83-84; Seneca, *Epist.*, XLII, 1; Statius, *Silvae*, II, 4, 34-35; II, 6, 87-88; III, 2, 114; Chaeremon, *frg.* 3 in Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 395-398; Pliny, VII, 153; X, 3-5; XI, 121; XII, 85; XIII, 42; XXIX, 29; XXIX, 56; *I Clement*, 25. Fitzpatrick, 21, thinks that the "*increased interest in the legend*" in the first century A.D. is to be attributed to the Egyptian obelisk in the Circus Maximus on which reference is made to the *benu* called phoenix in the translation of Hermapion (in Ammianus Marcellinus, XVII, 4, 20). She also suggests that "*Perhaps, too, it was from this very source that Ovid obtained the inspiration for his version of the legend*". This seems very unlikely, however, quite aside from the misconception that Ammianus refers to "*a Greek inscription from the hand of one Hermapion*", which anyone could read; the reference to the phoenix on the obelisk is so brief that it is impossible that the authors in question could have depended on them; see p. 24 here.

only nine mentions of the bird, eight of them known only from quotations by later authors. Of the writers who refer to the phoenix, the only one whose complete work has been preserved is Herodotus, but according to Eusebius it was reported by Porphyry that Herodotus took his information about the phoenix literally but in abbreviated form from the *Periegesis* by Hecataeus of Miletus.[1] There is no reason to doubt the reliability of this report.[2] If we then recall that the lost work of Alexander Polyhistor contained only a long quotation from Ezekiel the Dramatist,[3] there remain only seven writers who are known to have written independently on the phoenix before the beginning of our era. These writers are Hesiod, Hecataeus (in Herodotus), Antiphanes, Ezekiel the Dramatist (in Alexander Polyhistor), Aenesidemus, Manilius, and Laevius. A short summarization of the data provided by these authors illustrates how useful it is to remain aware of the nature of our pre-Christian sources.

Hesiod says only that the phoenix lives nine times longer than the raven and that the Nymphs live ten times longer than the phoenix.[4] The fragment in which this is said was an insoluble riddle even in Classical times. We have gone into this riddle in great detail and attempted to give a coherent explanation of it.[5] The only information about the phoenix this text seems to offer at first sight is the fact that the bird lives for a very long time and that it was already so well known in Hesiod's time that he could include it without qualification in a series of familiar animals.

Hecataeus, in Herodotus, gives a description of the phoenix on

[1] Porphyry in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, X, 3, 16: καὶ τί ὑμῖν λέγω ... ὡς Ἡρόδοτος ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ πολλὰ Ἑκαταίου Μιλησίου κατὰ λέξιν μετήνεγκεν ἐκ τῆς περιηγήσεως βραχέα παραποιήσας, τὰ τοῦ Φοίνικος ὀρνέου καὶ τὰ περὶ τοῦ ποταμίου ἵππου καὶ τῆς θήρας τῶν κροκοδείλων;

[2] For the dependence of Herodotus on Hecataeus, see F. Jacoby, *Hekataios*, 3, in *RE*, 7, 1912, 2675-2676; *cf.* also E. Lüddeckens, *Herodot und Ägypten*, in *ZDMG*, 104 (NF 29), 1954, 331-332 (also in W. Marg, *Herodot. Ein Auswahl aus der neueren Forschung*, Munich, 1962, 436-437; see also here p. 401-403.

[3] Alexander Polyhistor in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, IX, 29, 16.

[4] Hesiod, *frg.* 304, in Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum*, 11 (415c), see p. 80, n. 2.

[5] See p. 76-97.

the basis of a picture he had seen in Egypt. He also recounts, on the authority of the priests of Heliopolis, that every five hundred years the bird comes to Egypt from Arabia to bury its dead father, encased in an egg of myrrh, in the temple of the sun at Heliopolis.[1] This report, by virtue of its great age and relative abundance of detail, has been taken as the point of departure for all the discussions of the development of the phoenix myth.

The comic poet Antiphanes (fourth century B.C.) also, according to a fragment of his *Half-Brothers* preserved in Athenaeus, connected the phoenix with Heliopolis. In an enumeration of birds characteristic for certain cities, he says: 'In Heliopolis, it is said, there are phoenixes".[2] There is no reason to doubt that here, as in Herodotus, Heliopolis in Egypt is meant.[3]

A highly detailed description of the phoenix is found in *Exodus*, a play by the Hellenistic Jew Ezekiel the Dramatist (second century B.C.).[4] In addition to the description of the bird's external appearance, Ezekiel also remarks on its beautiful song and the fact that it is unmistakably the king of the birds.[5]

Of the authors mentioned so far, only Hecataeus-Herodotus refer to the death of the phoenix, but they too make no mention of its unusual genesis. The first report of the latter dates from the first century B.C. According to Diogenes Laertius, the sceptic Aenesidemus, in his *Pyrrhonea*, mentioned the phoenix, together with "fire animals" (salamanders?) and maggots, as an example of animals which reproduce themselves asexually.[6] He does not say how this occurs, but it is striking that he mentions the phoenix between two species of which one was said to arise from fire and the other from decomposing flesh. It is perhaps possible to deduce from this that

[1] Herodotus, II, 73; see p. 190-193.

[2] Antiphanes in Athenaeus, XIV, 655b.

[3] Rusch, 416, interprets Heliopolis as an oriental city of the sun that cannot be further localized. He also infers from this text that "*ruhig von einer Mehrheit von P. gesprochen wird*", but see p. 358, n. 5.

[4] Ezekiel the Dramatist, *Exodus*, 254-269, in Alexander Polyhistor-Eusebius (see p. 394, n. 3) and in Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comm. in Hexaem.*, (*PG* 18, 729c-d).

[5] See p. 283, n. 1, 193, n. 4.

[6] Aenesidemus in Diogenes Laertius, IX, 79: τῶν γὰρ ζῴων τὰ μὲν χωρὶς μίξεως γίνεσθαι, ὡς τὰ πυρίβια καὶ ὁ 'Αράβιος φοῖνιξ καὶ εὐλαί.

he knew one or both of the main versions of the phoenix myth.

The first coherent report on the genesis of the phoenix is given by the Roman senator Manilius, as handed down by Pliny. According to this account, after having lived 540 years in Arabia the phoenix dies on a fragrant nest, after which a small worm emerges from its bones and marrow and developes into a new phoenix, which then brings the remains of the old phoenix to the city of the sun near Panchaia. Manilius equates the lifespan of the phoenix with the Great Year, which was supposed to have begun in 312 B.C.[1]

But an entirely different tradition was incorporated by Laevius into his poem *Pterygion phoenicis*, a fragment of which is preserved in Charisius.[2] There, the phoenix is a votary of Venus. We have attempted to demonstrate that in this work Laevius adopted the rather unfamiliar conception of the phoenix as the daily escort of the sun.[3]

The fragmentary character of the pre-Christian sources means that great caution must be exercised before concluding that a new development is involved each time an element of the phoenix myth is mentioned for the first time.[4] Furthermore, we must not forget that some authors mention only those aspects of the myth that they considered useful for their argumentation. For Hesiod, Antiphanes, and Aenesidemus, these were the long lifespan, the occurrence in Heliopolis, and the asexual reproduction, respectively. There was no reason for these authors to interrupt their discussion to discourse on the phoenix myth, but it is also highly improbable that they did not know more about the bird. It is exactly the allusive character of their references to the phoenix that suggests that they felt they could rely upon their readers' familiarity with the subject. The amount of detail given by Ezekiel the Dramatist in his description of the phoenix makes it likely, however, that he drew on a tradition conveying much more information than he included.

With these considerations in mind, we shall now attempt to out-

[1] Manilius in Pliny, X, 4-5; see p. 187, 189, and 103.

[2] Laevius in Charisius, *Ars gramm.*, IV, 6.

[3] See p. 268-272.

[4] This is repeatedly assumed by Fitzpatrick, see below p. 405, n. 1. and p. 409, n. 4.

line the probable development of the phoenix myth. In doing so it will of course be necessary to make frequent reference to conclusions drawn from the foregoing analysis of the myth.

The Classical phoenix myth seems to have developed on the basis of the widespread oriental conception of the bird of the sun. There are several indications that this sun bird entered the Mycenaean culture from the Semitic world, via Phoenicia, that it flourished there, and that from there it spread throughout the Greek world, where it took form in the Greek folk mythology as the phoenix. In the Mycenaean world the pre-eminent sun bird was the griffin, which we can be virtually certain was indicated by the name *po-ni-ke*, φοῖνιξ, and whose iconography (bird type) is clearly dependent on the Phoenician way of representing it. The name *po-ni-ke* can best be explained as "the Phoenician bird", although the word itself is probably to be traced to a Semitic word for purple.[1] There is no reason to assume that a Phoenician or general Semitic name for the bird of the sun underlies the Mycenaean-Greek denomination.

After the decline of the Mycenaean culture, the griffin disappeared from the Greek world. Not until the middle of the eighth century B.C., at the end of the geometric period in Greek art, does it appear again on vases.[2] According to a scholiast on Aeschylus, Hesiod was the first who was able to tell all kinds of wondrous things about the griffins.[3] But it was only in the sixth century that more of the peculiarities of this creature were reported, by Aristeas.[4] It is difficult to escape the impression that the griffin made a fresh entry into the Greek world during the century in which Hesiod lived, but at this time under the name γρύψ. If it is correct that in the Mycenaean world the word *po-ni-ke* was used to denote the griffin, we can only conclude that the conceptions belonging to this creature became

[1] See p. 64-65.

[2] *Cf.* K. Ziegler, *Greif*, in *Der kleine Pauly*, II, 1967, 876, and A. Furtwängler, *Gryps*, in Roscher, *Lexikon*, I, 2, 1886-1890, 1758.

[3] G. Dindorf, *Aeschylus, Tragoediae superstites*, III. *Scholia Graeca*, Oxford, 1851 (reprint Hildesheim, 1962), 29 (ad *Prom.*, 803): πρῶτος Ἡσίοδος ἐτερατεύσατο τοὺς γρῦπας.

[4] Aristeas, *frg.* 5 (= Herodotus, IV, 13) and *frg.* 7 (= Pausanias, I, 24,6), *cf*, G. Kinkel, *Epicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, I, Lipsiae, 1877, 243-247.

modified to such an extent during the obscure Middle Ages of Greece that the later Greeks took the term φοῖνιξ to indicate a quite different animal. Even if we give due weight to the fact that we know nothing at all about the Mycenaean ideas about the griffin, we may still accept that between the *po-ni-ke* of the Mycenaeans and the φοῖνιξ of Hesiod a development of appreciably greater proportions took place than simply the linguistic development of a word.

On these grounds, therefore, it must be considered probable that the Classical phoenix myth is a purely Greek product, i.e. the Greek variant of the mythical conception of the bird of the sun found in various cultures of the Near, Middle and Far East.[1] This does not mean, of course, that all the points of agreement between the descriptions and myths of the individual sun birds should be considered the result of autonomous developments from a common basis. There was no lack of awareness in Classical times of the relationship between the phoenix and other birds of the sun such as the eagle, griffin, *benu*, *ziz*, *parôdars*, and still others. This indeed made it all the easier to transfer characteristics of one of these birds to another. But in the case of the phoenix this was rarely carried so far that the result was no longer reconcilable with the existing Classical ideas. The best example of these exceptional cases is found in the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, where the phoenix is described as the daily escort of the sun and as protector of the human world, as well as undergoing a daily renewal. In this description use is made of ideas

[1] This also explains certain points of agreement between the phoenix, the Chinese *fêng-huang*, and the Japanese *hō-ō*, see p. 228 and p. 415. The problem of these possible relationships is discussed by M. U. Hachisuka, *The identification of the Chinese Phoenix*, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1924, 585-589, who says, p. 589: "*In conclusion I suggest that the name phoenix is misleading when applied to the Chinese fabulous bird, which has associated with it no legend about self-burning*". This opinion is stated by M. P. Jabouille, *Le phoenix fabuleux de la Chine et le faisan ocellé d'Aunam*, in *Bulletin des Amis de Vieux Hué*, 16, 1929, 171-186. See also J. C. Ferguson, *Chinese Mythology*, (The Mythology of all Races, VIII), Boston, 1928, 98-100; W. H. Edmunds, *Pointers and clues to the subjects of Chinese and Japanese art*, London, (1934), 133, 391-392; S. C. Nott, *Chinese culture in the arts*, New York, 1947, 74 and pl. 55. A. Priest, *Phoenix in fact and fancy*, in *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, NS 1, 1942-1943, 97-101.

concerning the Jewish sun bird *ziz* and the Persian cosmic cock *parôdars*.[1] According to other texts, however, the tradition in Pseudo-Baruch is related to the griffin or the eagle.[2]

But the awareness of the mutual relationship between the various birds of the sun normally led to borrowing that did not affect the core of the Classical myth. Here, for instance, we may cite the description of the external appearance of the phoenix given by various authors originating from or having lived for a long time in the eastern part of the Mediterranean region.[3] In this connection we have also traced a certain influence of the ancient Egyptian iconography of the *benu*.[4] The latter sun bird had already been identified with the Greek phoenix by Hecataeus-Herodotus, and this culminated in Hellenistic and Roman times in complete fusion. We shall discuss below the question of the extent to which this identification had a direct influence on the development of the Classical phoenix myth.

Although the earliest development of the phoenix myth remains obscure, it nevertheless remains possible to demonstrate that certain elements of the later conceptions were already assumed by Hesiod or at least were known before Hecataeus-Herodotus.

Our discussion of Hesiod, *frg*. 304, has shown that this text can be satisfactorily explained as a calculation of the last of four successive world periods, together forming a Great Year of 360 Babylonian *sars* each comprising 3,600 years, parallel cases of which are found in Babylonia and India.[5] We concluded that this distinctly oriental conception reached Greece, and thus became known to Hesiod, via the same canals as the Hurrian-Hittite genealogy of the gods, i.e. via Phoenicia and the Greek islands.[6] It does not seem impossible that Mycenae played an intermediary role in this chain of transmission.

We also reached the conclusion that the lifespan of the phoenix in Hesiod, *frg*. 304, coincides with the duration of one month of the

[1] See p. 261-268.
[2] See p. 272-281.
[3] See p. 259-260.
[4] See p. 254.
[5] See p. 90-95.
[6] See p. 110-112.

world period indicated in this text.[1] It seems strange at first that here the bird of the sun is related to the duration of a month, because in this context a symbol of the moon would have seemed more appropriate. In fact, it remains a problem just why Hesiod selected the animals he names: the crow, the deer, the raven, and the phoenix. As far as the phoenix is concerned, it may be assumed that no special relationship between the bird and the month is involved here but rather the idea that of all the animals this bird of the sun had the longest lifespan. The only longer lifespan, according to Hesiod, is that of the Nymphs, for whom the duration coincides with that of life on earth in general, or ten world months.[2]

In Hesiod the phoenix is the symbol of a cyclical event. There was no difficulty in understanding the phoenix in this sense, because it was considered to be closely related to the sun, whose unending circular course determines the cycles of days, years, centuries, and Great Years. The total lifespan of twelve phoenixes covers the duration of the present world period. From this it follows that in Hesiod a fixed lifespan and—in parallelism with the sun—a periodic renewal, are already assumed. It is also possible that even in Hesiod's time it was accepted that only one phoenix existed at a time; just as the rising sun is the same sun that set the day before, it is the same phoenix that dies in decrepitude and is reborn in youthful vigour.

Therefore, there is good reason to surmise that the conception of a single phoenix as the periodically self-renewing bird of the sun, was known even before Hesiod. The symbolism of the phoenix expressed in Hesiod, *frg.* 304, persisted in several forms in the later Greek world. We shall return to this point, but here, before going into the development of the different versions of the death and resurrection of the bird, we wish to point to a final aspect of the myth that may be assumed to have been known in Greece even before Herodotus.

In Hesiod the lifespan of the phoenix is given as 972 generations of $33\frac{1}{3}$ years each, which amounts to 32,400 years. We have seen that still another version of the riddle of Hesiod was current, ac-

[1] See p. 95, 97.
[2] See p. 94, 97.

cording to which the duration of a generation was 60 years and which has therefore been called here the sexagesimal version.[1] Since this period did not affect the final result of the calculation, the lifespan of the crow, for instance, had to be put at five and that of the phoenix at 540 generations of 60 years each. Under the influence of a later view that in Hesiod's riddle the word generation actually meant one year,[2] it could be said that the phoenix lived 972 or 540 years, according to the version followed. The former is implied by Plutarch in the opinion that the Nymphs live 9,720 years; the latter is found in Manilius.[3] This makes it highly likely that the 500 years assigned to the phoenix in Herodotus represents a rounding off of the 540 years in Manilius and thus ultimately goes back to the sexagesimal version of Hesiod's riddle. In the same way it may be surmised that the 1,000 years assigned by several authors to the phoenix [4] represent a rounding off of the 972 one-year generations of Hesiod's version. But here there may also have been an influence of certain ideas concerning the periodization of metempsychosis.[5] These remarks take us directly to the consideration of the report given by Herodotus on the phoenix, since this tells us that the 500-year period of the sun bird goes back to information supplied by Egyptian priests. It also brings us to the problem of the development of the two main version of the Classical phoenix myth.

In the evaluation of Herodotus' remarks on the phoenix, no more than superficial attention has been given to Porphyry's statement that Herodotus took his description of this bird, like those of the hippopotamus and the crocodile hunt, from the *Periegesis* by Hecataeus of Miletus.[6] The descriptions of the hippopotamus and the phoenix clearly show that Herodotus included a number of data whose accuracy he had not confirmed. Comparison of the two reports reveals a common characteristic: the external appearance proves to be determined to a high degree by the name of the animal in question. Of the hippopotamus it is said, for instance, that it has

[1] See p. 86-87.
[2] See p. 80.
[3] See p. 80 and p. 88.
[4] See p. 69, n. 6.
[5] See p. 138 and below p. 418.
[6] See p. 394, n. 1.

the nose, mane, and tail of the horse and makes the same sound.[1] These remarks cannot have been based on his own observations, and seem obviously to have been suggested by the animal's name. The same holds for the description of the phoenix. Herodotus says that he has seen only a picture of this bird. If this representation was correct—a condition he specifies explicitly—the phoenix has gold and red feathers and resembles the eagle most closely in appearance and size.[2] This description does not correspond in any respect to that of the Egyptian *benu*, which was worshipped in Heliopolis, for the latter was without exception represented as a bluish-grey heron.[3] Despite the assurance to the contrary, it must be assumed that the description of the phoenix in Herodotus was not after all based on a representation of the *benu* but was derived from the name and the character of the sun bird. The comparison with the eagle was obvious, because from ancient times this bird, too, had been considered a sun bird, a conception which persisted throughout Classical times.[4] The indication of gold and red feathers for a bird called φοῖνιξ is hardly surprising; these are also the colours of the rising sun.

The descriptions of the hippopotamus and the phoenix make it very likely that Herodotus was not writing here on the basis of his own observations but depended entirely on some source. No objection can be found to Porphyry's statement that on this point Herodotus obtained his information from Hecataeus of Miletus. The report of Hecataeus-Herodotus gives an impression of reliability by the reference to a personally observed representation and the citation of Egyptian priests, but for both the bird's external appearance and its 500-year lifespan no evidence or suggestions whatever are to be found in Egypt, whereas both are available in Greece itself. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Herodotus is a very dubious source for the Egyptian ideas about the phoenix. To take his information as a basis for concluding that the Classical phoenix

[1] Herodotus, II, 71: τετράπουν ἐστί, δίχηλον, ὁπλαὶ βοός, σιμόν, λοφιὴν ἔχον ἵππου, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, οὐρὴν ἵππου καὶ φωνήν, μέγαθος ὅσον τε βοῦς ὁ μέγιστος.

[2] See p. 251, 253.

[3] See p. 15, and pl. I.

[4] See Th. Schneider, *Adler*, in *RAC*, I, 1950, 89-90.

myth had an Egyptian origin, is to choose very shaky grounds indeed.

But it is nevertheless undeniable that Hecataeus recognized the Classical phoenix in the *benu* of Heliopolis. Research done by Egyptologists has made it quite clear that this identification must have depended mainly on the agreement between the names. The word *bnw* or *bjn-w* was pronounced **boin(e)*, which makes it understandable that Hecataeus thought that it was the Greek φοῖνιξ that was worshipped in Heliopolis.[1] There may, however, have been another reason for Hecataeus to equate the *benu* with the phoenix. We have seen in connection with the discussion of the Egyptian ideas concerning the *benu* that the conception of the dying and reviving sun bird was not unknown in Egypt, although the sources on this point are rather scarce. The texts refer to the embalmed body of the *benu* kept in Heliopolis and worshipped there.[2] If Hecataeus knew the conception that the phoenix arises from its dead father and pays his remains the last honours in the temple of the sun, he could have concluded from reports about the embalmed body of the *benu* that the temple of the sun to which the phoenix travelled must have been the temple at the Egyptian Heliopolis. If this is correct, it must have been due to Hecataeus-Herodotus that the flight to Heliopolis came to be incorporated into the phoenix myth.[3]

In the discussion of the two main versions of the phoenix myth we have seen that in one form of the version in which the phoenix is consumed by fire, the journey to Heliopolis and the resulting

[1] See p. 21-22.
[2] See p. 18-20.
[3] Rusch, 416-418, too thinks that the Egyptian Heliopolis first entered the phoenix myth via Hecataeus. It should be pointed out here that Rusch's references to the most important phoenix passages are often unreliable and must always be checked. He says, for instance, that Lactantius and Claudian (see p. 225, n. 2 and n. 4) and Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84, 3, do not assume any connection with Egypt whatever, although these are just among the authors who did so explicitly. Statius, *Silvae*, III, 2, 114 too (see below, p. 410) assumes a connection with Egypt, but Rusch says the contrary. Antiphanes (see p. 395, n. 2) and Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 406 *(Hyperionis urbe)* may very well also have had Heliopolis in mind. Walla, 52 considers the connection with Heliopolis as one of the oldest elements of the myth, taken from Egyptian ideas about the *benu;* she thinks that Heliopolis "*Ursprung und Ausgangspunkt der Legende vom Vogel Phönix darstellt*".

connection between the phoenix and Egypt does not occur at all.[1] That this connection was not considered indispensable is also evident from the oldest report concerning the genesis from the dead predecessor, which is given by Manilius. According to this author, the phoenix dies on a fragrant nest after having lived 540-years, and from its bones and marrow a worm arises which rapidly becomes a young and then an adult bird. The first act of the new phoenix is to carry the entire nest with its contents to the city of the sun near Panchaia, where it places its burden on the altar.[2] There is no indication in Manilius of a special connection between the phoenix and Heliopolis in Egypt. We have already pointed out that the 540-year lifespan of the phoenix given by Manilius reflects a purer tradition than the 500-year version of Herodotus, and it seems very likely that Manilius' entire report is much closer to the original version than that of Hecataeus-Herodotus.

Herodotus does not mention the death and resurrection of the phoenix, but goes into detail about the flight of the young bird with its dead father to the city of the sun. He says that he has serious doubts about the information supplied by the Egyptians,[3] but there is no indication that he questioned the flight of the phoenix in itself. This story, however, implies the prior death of the old phoenix and the resurrection of the new one. It is conceivable that Hecataeus knew a tradition concerning the phoenix that agreed closely in many ways with the report given by Manilius. According to this latter tradition, the young bird carried its dead father in the nest made of fragrant materials to the city of the sun, and this would explain why Hecataeus-Herodotus rejected the story of the transportation of the old phoenix in an egg of myrrh and the trial flights leading up to it. It is possible that this was only a less well known version than that given by Manilius, but it is also conceivable that here Hecataeus drew on Egyptian traditions about the *benu* which he did not entirely understand and which we can no longer reconstruct.

[1] See p. 147.
[2] See p. 189.
[3] Herodotus, II, 73: τοῦτον δὲ λέγουσι μηχανᾶσθαι τάδε, ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες.

Because Herodotus does not mention the death and resurrection of the phoenix it has often been assumed that nothing was known about them in his time.[1] This assumption seems to be confirmed by Achilles Tatius, Artemidorus, Celsus, and Aelian, who say nothing about an unusual genesis of the phoenix although they mention the journey of the young bird with its dead father. Achilles Tatius and Celsus, like Herodotus, say that the remains were transported in a ball of myrrh, whereas Artemidorus and Aelian say nothing about how this occurred.[2] Here, however, we must keep in mind the point made at the beginning of this chapter, i.e. that it is essential to weigh the context in which a writer refers to the phoenix.

Artemidorus recounts that a man painted a picture of the phoenix in a dream, and then goes into what this might have meant. An Egyptian had told him that the man who had this dream was later compelled to carry his dead father to the graveyard on his own shoulders; this could have been the meaning of the dream, because "the phoenix too buries his own father".[3] Since this is the only point required for comparison, the rest of the phoenix myth is in this context irrelevant. The fact that Artemidorus gives no further details on this point certainly need not be taken to imply that he did not know the story of the genesis of the phoenix from its dead father. Indeed, he immediately goes on to recount the version of the burning.

Celsus, according to Origen, drew attention to the piety of brute animals—which man could take as an example—and cited the

[1] *Cf.* Fitzpatrick, 22: "*Pliny makes some of the most drastic changes in the legend ... Here again we have a new step in the development of the story, for never before has any author narrated a miraculous birth of the offspring of the phoenix from the remains of the parent*" Sbordone, *La fenice*, 5-6, saw the oldest version of the myth in a tradition according to which the bird goes to Heliopolis periodically, without any recognition of an unusual genesis. This oldest version is supposed to be indicated by Herodotus, Achilles Tatius, Origen, and Aelian, but see below. According to this view, it was on this basis that the version of the genesis from the dead predecessor (6-11) and of the burning (12-20) originated. Walla, 62-65, adopted Sbordone's view with slight modifications. Rusch, 420-421, also thought that borth principal versions began their development after the connection with Heliopolis was established.

[2] See p. 190-193.

[3] Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, IV, 47; see p. 151.

phoenix which buries its dead father in a ball of myrrh in the temple of the sun.[1] The moralist Aelian expresses surprise that the phoenix knows exactly when the 500 years of its life have been completed and where it must find the distant city of Helipolis to bury its father. He considered this wisdom to be more astonishing than the political activites and martial exploits of man.[2] As for Artemidorus, it is entirely logical that these writers mention only the flight to Egypt. In the context of their discussions that is the only relevant point, but this in no sense implies that they knew nothing about the unusual way in which the phoenix came to life.

For Achilles Tatius, too, the omission of the death and resurrection of the phoenix can be explained. In referring to an appearance of the phoenix in Heliopolis, he says that the bird comes from Ethiopia with its dead father, describes how it looks, and then goes into great detail about what occurs during its short stay in Heliopolis.[3] All this he puts in the mouth of an Egyptian, and the story is told entirely from the Egyptian point of view: there is a consistent omission of the events in the bird's life taking place outside Egypt and thus escaping the observation of the Egyptians. Since Achilles Tatius deliberately limited his report to what could be observed in Egypt itself, there is no reason to assume that he knew nothing about how the young phoenix came into being.

It is striking that in Herodotus, too, all the information about the phoenix is told from the Egyptian point of view: the bird is described on the basis of a picture to be seen in Heliopolis, and for the other details reference is made to reports by priests of Heliopolis. The latter are supposed to have claimed that the young phoenix makes trial flights with an egg made of myrrh, after which it hollows out the egg, places its father in the cavity, seals up the opening, and departs with its burden for Heliopolis.[4] Herodotus found this story difficult to believe. But there is no reason whatever to assume that neither Hecataeus nor Herodotus knew nothing more than this about the phoenix. Herodotus rather gives the impression of conveying

[1] Celsus, in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 98; see p. 191, n. 3.
[2] Aelian, VI, 58; see p. 194.
[3] Achilles Tatius, III, 24-25; see p. 235 and p. 195.
[4] Herodotus, II, 73; see p. 190.

only the "Egyptian" tradition about the flight of the phoenix just because it diverged so strikingly at this point from the version current in his time. It is also possible that Hecataeus said something about the resurrection of the phoenix but that this was omitted by Herodotus because it was so well known generally. Porphyry indeed says that Herodotus gave an abbreviated version of Hecateus.[1]

On the basis of the foregoing we may conclude that it is highly probable that in the tradition transmitted by Herodotus, too, the genesis of the young phoenix from the decomposing body of its predecessor is implied. This form of genesis, which is found first in Manilius, in any case forms an organic whole with the subsequent flight of the young bird with the remains of its father to the city of the sun.[2] The discrepancies between Herodotus and Manilius are explained best by assuming that the version of Manilius is the original one. On the basis of the similarity between the names of the *benu* and the phoenix and because of the stories of the embalmed body of the *benu* in Heliopolis, Hecataeus must have concluded that the temple of the sun mentioned in the tradition known to him was located in that city. The transportation of the dead phoenix in its fragrant nest recounted by Manilius also seems more coherent than the story Herodotus reported but considered rather dubious, that the young bird carries its dead father to Heliopolis enclosed in an egg made myrrh. If the latter tradition indeed arose under Egyptian

[1] See p. 394, n. 1.

[2] Although Hubaux and Leroy (160-161) show that they had noticed the divergence between the two principal versions, they gave too little weight to the nature of the differences; because they assumed (145) that the Heliopolitan priests would certainly have told Hecataeus that at sunrise each morning the *benu* "*ressuscitait entouré des flammes et d'aromates*" they considered it "*une aporie des plus graves*" that Herodotus omitted or forgot the episode of the burning. They failed to realize that in the fire version there is no logical reason for the transportation of the dead phoenix to Heliopolis. They put forward (144-145) the "*hypothèse invérifiable*" that Solinus borrowed his version, which deviates from Pliny (see p. 156 here), from Manilius, to whose work he was referred by Pliny himself, "*afin de pouvoir combler les lacunes qu'il constatait chez le Naturaliste*". But Pliny's version (= Manilius) shows no lacunae; it relates the genesis of the young phoenix from the decaying remains of the old phoenix in detail, and there is no possible way to reconcile this with the version of the burning.

influences, it is probable that it implied the assumption that the embalmed body of the old phoenix was preserved in this state. Herodotus does not mention the altar on which the young phoenix placed its burden or say anything about the cremation of the remains of the old phoenix. The later writers who followed his version with the ball of myrrh, do, however, mention the burning of the remains.[1] It is possible that this is a secondary element, borrowed from the version in which the remains are carried in the fragrant nest to the altar in the city of the sun, of which the cremation is the logical consequence.

The oldest report of the genesis of the young phoenix from the old one, in Manilius, already mentions a worm from which the young phoenix develops. It is no longer possible to determine whether this element was present from the beginning in this version or was added later. Whatever the case may be, the intermediate stage of the worm may have been considered obvious because the genesis of maggots in decomposing meat was thought to be a form of self-creation.[2] It is conceivable, too, that the worm represents a rationalizing element introduced to make the re-appearance of the phoenix more reasonable.[3] It seems likely that Aenesidemus also knew the tradition with the worm, since he mentions the phoenix together with the "fire animals" and the maggots, as animals that reproduce asexually.[4] Thus, he associated the phoenix with a spontaneous revival from fire or decaying flesh, and perhaps even with both. This brings us to the problem of the origin and the development of the cremation version, which was and still is the best known of the traditions.

[1] Pomp. Mela, III, 84; Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28; see p. 196. Rusch, 419, tells us that this also happens in *i.a.* Artemidorus and Claudian. Artemidorus, however, only mentions in this connection the burial of the old phoenix (καταθάπτει); he mentions the burning of the phoenix solely in connection with the other principal version, see p. 151. Claudian is a badly chosen example, since he follows the version of the cremation and only in the end adds, under influence of the other version, the flight to Egypt and the (second) burning of the remains of the old phoenix, (see p. 226). Claudian's combination of both versions is rightly mentioned separately by Rusch, 421, while he, less correctly, refers to Pomp. Mela (but not Tacitus) as another example of such a connection.

[2] See p. 187.

[3] Thus Rusch, 421.

[4] See p. 395, n. 6.

It is usually assumed that the burning of the phoenix and its resurrection from its own ashes is a rather late development of the myth. This view is based on the argument that the first indications of this version are found in a number of authors who wrote in Latin in the first century A.D.[1] But here too, the general remarks on the dating and nature of our sources given at the beginning of this chapter, will hold. To elucidate this point we must re-examine the first mentions of this version.

For some authors it is not clear just which version they had in mind, because they refer only to the ashes of the phoenix. Lucan lists a number of magical things used by the Thessalian sorceress Eryctho to bring a dead person back to life: dragon's eyes, stones which rattle being warmed under a brooding bird, the flying serpent of Arabia, the viper born near the Red Sea that guards the precious pearl-shell, the skin shed by the horned serpent of Lybia, and the ashes of the phoenix lying on an Eastern altar.[2] It is impossible to determine whether Lucan had in mind here the ashes of the phoenix which settles on the altar and is consumed by fire or the ashes of the old one brought to the altar for burning by the young phoenix. The same difficulty is raised by Pliny's report of medicines made from the ashes and the nest of the phoenix.[3]

The resurrection brought about by fire is unmistakably meant by Martial and Statius. In an epigram the former compares the glorious rebuilding of Rome after a fire with the renewal of the phoenix: just as fire renews the Assyrian nests each time one bird has lived ten centuries, so in the same way has the new Rome put aside its old age and itself taken on the likeness of its ruler.[4] Statius expresses

[1] *Cf.* e.g. Fitzpatrick, 24 and 26; see also n. 4 here; Sbordone, *La fenice*, 12-15, Walla, 65.

[2] Lucan, VI, 680: *aut cinis eoa positi phoenicis in ara.*

[3] Pliny, XXIX, 29: *ex cinere phoenicis nidoque medicinis.* Türk, 3459, considers it possible that Lucan and Pliny did not have in mind the self-burning of the phoenix but the burning of the remains of the old phoenix.

[4] Martial, *Epigram.*, V, 7, 1-4: *Qualiter Assyrios renovant incendia nidos, / una decem quotiens saecula vixit avis, / taliter exuta est veterem nova Roma senectam / et sumpsit vultus praesidis ipsa sui.* Fitzpatrick, 24, says "*But in the brief notices of Martial we find the most violent changes in the legend*"; on p. 25 she calls the rising of the phoenix from its ashes, as told in the *Greek Physiologus*, 7, "*a feature probably borrowed from Martial*". The

the wish that Isis will solve many riddles of Egypt for Maecius Celer, including why ordinary animals can equal powerful gods and what kind of altars the long-lived phoenix prepares for itself.[1] The altar prepared by the phoenix is found only in the cremation version of the myth, so that Statius must have had this version in mind. In another place he compares the burning of the parrot of Atedius Melior with that of the phoenix: Atedius' beloved bird is not sent without honours to the world of shades but rather with Assyrian *amomum*, Arabian herbs, and Sicilian saffron, and therefore mounts the fragrant pyre like a happier phoenix, not suffering the ills of old age.[2] Despite the comparison drawn by Statius between the cremation of the dead parrot with that of the phoenix, his choice of words clearly shows that he had in mind the burning of the still living phoenix tormented by senile weakness; the point of comparison is the costly fragrant pyre they both "mount" rather than that both birds are consumed by fire after death.

The cremation and subsequent resurrection are not described in detail by either Martial or Statius. Only Martial unmistakably implies that the phoenix is rejuvenated by the fire. But this of course does not mean that they did not know anything else about the bird. They made only a passing reference to a particular element of the myth because that element was relevant to their subject. In the case of Lucan and Pliny this was the magic and medicinal power of the phoenix's ashes, for Martial it was the renewal by fire, and for Statius the mysterious aspect of the burning and subsequent revival and, in the second text to which we have referred, the fragrant pyre. In all these passages the phoenix is not the main subject, and is only mentioned in connection with that subject. Even if Lucan and Pliny did not actually have the cremation version in mind, the evidence provided by Martial and Statius proves that this version was so generally known that an allusion to it could be considered suf-

view that Martial offered new material is also argued against by Hubaux and Leroy, 190.

[1] Statius, *Silvae*, III, 2, 114: *quae sibi praesternat vivax altaria phoenix.*

[2] Statius, *Silvae*, II, 4, 33-37: *at non inglorius umbris / mittitur: Assyrio cineres adolentur amomo / et tenues Arabum respirant gramine plumae / Sicaniisque crocis. Senio nec fessus inerti / scandet odoratos Phoenix felicior ignes.* For the burning of birds, see Hubaux and Leroy, 77, n. 2.

ficient. There is nothing suggesting that they were aware that they were following a recent and entirely new development in the Classical conceptions concerning the phoenix.[1]

From all this we may certainly draw the conclusion that the version of the cremation must also have been known in pre-Christian times. This also seems to be indicated by the mention of the phoenix in Aenesidemus.[2] If, in addition, we give due weight to the character of the pre-Christian sources on the phoenix, it becomes difficult to defend the view that the cremation version is a rather late development of the phoenix myth. Indeed, the other version too is first encountered in reports dating from the first century B.C., but we have considered it probable that this same version is implied by Herodotus. We can only observe that we are confronted as early as the first century A.D. with the entire complexity of the phoenix myth.[3]

[1] That the cremation version was commonly known in the first century A.D. is also shown by a variant of the legend of Caeneus, which is found only in Ovid. According to *Metam.*, XII, 524-531, Mopsus saw flying up from Caeneus' funeral pyre a bird with yellow feathers he had never seen before or ever saw again. He called out to it (530-531): *"O salve", dixit, "Lapitheae gloria gentis, / maxime vir quondam, sed nunc avis unica, Caeneu"*, The *avis unica* is the phoenix, see p. 357. It seems certain that here Ovid had the phoenix in mind; it is doubtful that he obtained his version from older sources, and it was probably his own idea. M. Delcourt, *La légende de Kaineus*, in *RHR*, 144, 1953, 129-150 concluded, on the basis of Ovid's version and e.g. because according to Virgil, *Aen.*, VI, 488, the original female sex was restored to Caeneus in the underworld, that there was originally a very close relationship between the myths of the phoenix and of Caeneus. If Delcourt is correct, the version of the burning of the phoenix must be very old. Hubaux and Leroy, 239-250, have pointed out that the idea that at the consecration of an emperor an eagle flies heavenward from the pyre, is influenced by the phoenix. The reverse, i.e. that the version of the burning originated from the apotheosis of an emperor (as suggested by M. P. Nilsson in his review of Hubaux and Leroy's study in *Gnomon*, 19, 1941, 215) cannot be accepted in the light of the foregoing. Reference must also be made in this connection to the birds which, according to Ovid, *Metam*, XIII, 599-608, took their genesis from the aggregating ashes of Memnon's funeral pyre. Here, the version of the burning of the phoenix may have played a role. For the rest, the differences between the phoenix and the Memnon birds are so great that a closer connection between the two myths may be considered as excluded.

[2] See p. 395, n. 6.

[3] *Cf.* also Türk, 3458: *"Was älter ist, lässt sich aus der früheren oder späteren Überlieferung nicht entscheiden"*.

Which of the two versions is the oldest cannot be determined with certainty from the sources presently available. On this point we can only reach more or less well founded assumptions. With this proviso, we wish to put forward the suggestion that the fire version must be considered the earlier. The basic element of the whole myth is that the phoenix is a bird of the sun. As early as Hesiod, its life was considered to coincide with a cyclical world period determined by the sun. It seems quite possible that the connection between the phoenix and self-renewing time gave rise to the idea of its periodic revival from death. It is clear that the version of the burning is more consistent with a sun bird than the version of the genesis from the decaying body of a predecessor. In the version of the cremation the relationship with the sun in the entire process of death and resurrection is implied throughout, whereas in the other version it reaches expression only in the final phase, when the young phoenix brings its dead father to the city of the sun.[1]

The question arises at this point whether there could have been a particular reason for the introduction of the genesis from the father's remains, which in simple fact seems so much less consistent with the bird of the sun. In view of the great symbolic significance attached to the phoenix from ancient times, it seems obvious that this reason must be sought in a particular symbolism. It was at an early date that the phoenix became a symbol of life after death and of revivification. We have tried to show that among the Orphic-Pythagoreans the symbolism of the periodic renewal of time was transformed into the symbolism of the periodic renewal of life. We shall return to some aspects of the latter symbolism. The point here is that it is quite possible that it was under the influence of the conception of the phoenix as a symbol of the soul and the renewal of life after death that the version of the genesis of the bird from the remains of its father arose. The Pythagoreans were opposed to cremation because they did not wish something mortal to receive a share of the divine

[1] Walla, 86, is of the opinion that the fire version evolved from the motif of the burning of the nest with the remains of the old phoenix on the altar of the sun in Heliopolis. She has correctly seen that this motif is the only point on which a derivation of the fire version from the other principal version could be argued, but the improbability seems evident.

(i.e. fire).[1] Since they held this view, they might well have preferred to fortify their particular symbolism of the phoenix by discarding its cremation; but in the present state of our knowledge we cannot reach certainty on this point.

Both the main versions contain the common element that before its death the phoenix makes a fragrant nest or funeral pyre. The relationship between this bird and aromatics is determined by several factors. The phoenix was thought to live in regions from which scented materials originated (Arabia, Ethiopia, India).[2] Furthermore, it was closely associated with the abode of the blessed, in both its Classical and Judaeo-Christian forms, which was also characterized by aromatic scents.[3] With respect to the death and resurrection of the phoenix, we have found that these aromatic materials must be seen pre-eminently against the background of Classical funeral customs, which often involved the use of large quantities of fragrant herbs and other scented materials.[4] This last element is most clearly expressed by Lactantius: the bird strews itself with aromatics so that it can die at its own funeral.[5] In this context the aromatic scents symbolize the life that triumphs over death.

The existence of two different traditions concerning the death and resurrection of the phoenix had the inevitable consequence that elements were shifted from one version to the other. For instance, according to a number of texts the burning of the phoenix occurs in Heliopolis in Egypt.[6] That the connection with Egypt in this version was not considered as an indispensable element is shown by the tradition that the phoenix lives in India and is renewed there by cremation.[7] The most logical explanation is still that the flight to

[1] *Cf.* Jamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica*, 154: κατακάειν δὲ οὐκ εἴα τὰ σώματα τῶν τελευτησάντων, μάγοις ἀκολούθως, μηδενὸς τῶν θείων τὸ θνητὸν μεταλαμβάνειν ἐθελήσας. As Jamblichus himself mentions, this was an opinion of the Hellenized *magi*, *cf.* J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, Paris, 1938 74ff., and Sotion in Diogenes Laertius, I, 7: καὶ ἀνόσιον ἡγεῖσθαι πυρὶ θάπτειν, *cf.* Bidez-Cumont II, 67).

[2] See p. 305-307.

[3] See e.g. p. 172.

[4] See p. 169.

[5] Lactantius, vss.91-92; see p. 170-171.

[6] See p. 150, n. 2 and 3.

[7] See p. 147-150.

Egypt and the cremation in Heliopolis did not belong to this version originally but were borrowed from the other version.[1] The same holds for the worm, which according to some authors arose from the ashes of the cremated phoenix and then in turn gave rise to the new phoenix. As early an author as Epiphanius found this conception so illogical that he made the burning of the phoenix only partial, which permitted the worm to arise from the remaining part of its body.[2] It is not necessary to recapitulate here all the similar cases of borrowing already discussed for the two main versions of the myth.[3] The clearest example is found in Lactantius, who has the bird die a natural death and the body burn on its nest, after which the new phoenix develops like a butterfly via a larva (the worm!) and cocoon, and then carries the ashes of its predecessor to Egypt.[4]

As the bird of the sun, the phoenix must have been considered from an early date to symbolize self-renewing time. We have assumed that it was on this basis that the idea of its periodic renewal developed. Whether or not this is correct, it is in any case certain that almost all of the other elements of the phoenix myth were determined to a high degree by symbolism. This holds in the very first place for the reports of the appearances of the bird in the world of man.

Even in Hesiod the bird was already a symbolic indication of a cyclical world period equal, according to our interpretation, to one month of the world year. We have attempted to demonstrate that Berossus of Babylon still knew this conception of the Great Year and that it was on this basis that he had the beginning of the Seleucid dynasty mark the beginning of a new world period.[5] Manilius

[1] Sbordone, *La fenice*, 12-15, too, sees the burning in some other place than Egypt as the oldest form of this version (although he incorrectly calls Dionysius "*il solo scrittore che localizzi decisamente la fenice presso gl'Indiani*"; see p. 147, n. 1). He sees the self-burning of the phoenix in Heliopolis (15-20) as the "*ultima fase della nostra leggenda*".

[2] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 84; see p. 212. Epiphanius has the worm develop to a mature phoenix in three days. This motif was first introduced into the phoenix myth in the Greek *Physiologus*, 7, to make the bird more suitable as a symbol of Christ, see p. 214-215.

[3] See p. 194, 197, 225-226.

[4] See p. 210, 217-219.

[5] See p. 91.

too unmistakably represents this tradition based on Hesiod's riddle: he has the phoenix live 540 years (sexagesimal version) and puts its most recent appearance in 312 B.C., when Seleucus I finally made himself master of Babylonia.[1] Manilius also says that the lifespan of the phoenix coincides with the duration of an entire Great Year, although in Hesiod's riddle the bird lives only one world month. This is a development that must be considered unavoidable.[2] In the first place, it was an obvious step to relate the self-renewing bird of the sun with the cycle of the Great Year whose beginning and end mark the beginning and end of the world. In the second place, the original mythical conception of the exceedingly long Great Year underwent a development allowing the indication of much shorter, precisely computable periods as Great Years too.[3] And in the third place, from the earliest times the appearance of a new ruler and of a new era were considered to mark the recurrence of the Golden Age, a return to the fortunate circumstances prevailing at the beginning of the Great Year. These ideas became closely associated with the symbolism of the phoenix, as illustrated by the case of the appearance of phoenix under Seleucus I. Almost all of the appearances of the phoenix mentioned in the Classical and Early Christian literature are determined by this complex of ideas.[4] The main accent consistently falls on the symbolism of the phoenix as inaugurator of a new era; the appearance at the beginning of the rule of a new king or emperor is a derivative aspect of this symbolism, even though it sometimes seems to occur almost independently.

A good example of the linking of the phoenix with a computable, astronomical Great Year is provided by the reported appearance of

[1] Manilius in Pliny, X, 5; see p. 103. Rusch, 420, also appears not to have read this text correctly; he understood from it that the phoenix had appeared in 97 B.C., whereas Manilius actually says that that was the year in which he wrote and that the phoenix had appeared 215 years before that.

[2] See p. 105.

[3] See p. 75-76.

[4] It is remarkable that the same ideas were held in China with respect to the bird *fêng-huang*, see p. 228, n. 5 and the work of Edmunds (cited on p. 398, n. 1), 391-392: this is a bird "*whose appearance on earth is regarded as an auspicious sign heralding the advent of a great and glorious ruler, or bringing benediction upon his reign*".

the bird at the beginning of the Egyptian Sothic period.[1] There are good grounds on which to conclude that this link was first established under Ptolemy III Euergetes, in support of the calendar reform introduced by the Decree of Canopus (238 B.C.). This makes it possible to explain Tacitus' report that the phoenix appeared under Ptolemy III.[2] We have assumed that the appearance of the phoenix under the Egyptian king Sesosis, which is also mentioned by Tacitus, must be explained on the basis of the contemporary opposition to the calendar of Canopus.[3] It is obvious that in these cases, as in its iconography,[4] the phoenix was identified with the Egyptian *benu*. After Hecataeus—Herodotus this identification certainly persisted, and it is understandable that the Greek rulers of Egypt attempted to lend authority to the introduction of a new era by announcing an appearance of the phoenix. But in ancient Egypt the *benu* was never a symbol of the Sothic period.[5] The tradition transmitted by Tzetzes that according to Chaeremon the phoenix lives 7,006 years, must go back to a quite different but no longer traceable calculation of the Great Year.[6]

The appearance of the phoenix always indicates an important turn in world history. We have concluded that the appearance, reported by Tacitus, at the time of Amasis, the last great Egyptian King, was meant to emphasize the end of Egyptian independence and the beginning of the Persian rule.[7] It may be supposed that this appearance of the phoenix was first introduced in later times, when the historical distance had become great enough to permit the conclusion that the rule of Amasis had indeed marked the end of a great period in the history of Egypt. The same conception is found in the tradition that the death of Tiberius, and with it the beginning of a new era, was announced by an appearance of the phoenix in Egypt.[8]

[1] See p. 70-72.
[2] Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 28; see p. 106.
[3] See p. 107-108.
[4] See p. 242-243, and 254.
[5] See p. 22, 29, and p. 29-32, for the views of Sbordone, Rusch, Hubaux and Leroy, Walla, and others.
[6] Chaeremon, in Tzetzes, *Chiliad.*, V, 395-398; see p. 109.
[7] See p. 108-109.
[8] See texts on p. 113-115.

When Emperor Claudius exhibited a so-called phoenix at the Forum during the celebration of the 800th anniversary of Rome, this was not done on the basis of a tradition that the bird appeared every hundred years. This exhibition, which was not taken very seriously by Claudius' contemporaries, was meant to support the idea that the beginning of the new century introduced an entirely new era that would be characterized, under the salutary leadership of the emperor, by the joy of the Golden Age.[1] The same notion led various emperors to issue coins with such legends as *Saeculum Aureum*, *Αἰών*, *Aeternitas*, and *Felicium Temporum Reparatio*.[2] For the Αἰών coins of Antoninus Pius, furthermore, it was also important that the beginning of the new emperor's rule roughly coincided with the renewal of the Sothic period in A.D. 139.[3]

In this connection mention must also be made of the conception that at its appearance the phoenix is accompanied by a reverential escort of many kinds of other birds.[4] It was of course very important here that the phoenix was considered to be the king of the birds.[5] On the other hand, however, the agreement on this point with the panegyrics on new rulers is so striking that it must be assumed that this aspect of the phoenix myth too was influenced by the symbolism of the bird.[6]

The above-mentioned conceptions concerning the beginning of a new era were also related to the founding of Constantinople. John of Salisbury reports that this important event was supposed to have been marked by an appearance of the phoenix.[7]

The Classical symbolism of the phoenix discussed so far also found application among Jews and Christians. The Egyptian Jews whose spiritual centre was located in the temple at Leontopolis considered the founding of this temple to be not an unlawful break with the Jerusalem-oriented cultic tradition of the Jewish people but rather the fulfilment of God's will. Consequently, they held that at the con-

[1] See p. 115-116.
[2] See pl. VI, 3, 8, 9; VII, 9; VIII, 1-9.
[3] See p. 105.
[4] See p. 179, 193, 227-228.
[5] See p. 193.
[6] See p. 228-229.
[7] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, I, 13; see p. 117.

secration of their temple the phoenix had appeared as an indication that a completely new phase of the Jewish religion had begun.[1] In the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* appearances of the phoenix play an important role in a Christian conception of the history of salvation. The bird acts as the inaugurator of the three eras *ante legem, sub lege,* and *post legem* or *sub gratia,* starting with Abel, Moses, and Christ, respectively.[2]

Not only the reports concerning the appearances of the phoenix but also the various traditions pertaining to its abode, its food, and its sex are to a great extent determined by its symbolism. One of the main factors involved here is the conception of the phoenix as symbol of the soul and of the life after death. We have attempted to demonstrate that even before the time of Plato, Hesiod's riddle was applied by Orphic-Pythagoreans for the periodization of metempsychosis and that this resulted in the phoenix becoming a symbol of the soul.[3] According to Plato, the soul usually had to pass through ten periods of 1,000 years each before it could escape the wheel of birth.[4] This could easily have resulted from the assumption for the soul of the same number of periods as had to be accepted for life in general on the basis of Hesiod's riddle. But in the former case the periods of the soul were expressed not in generations but in years.[5] The phoenix would thus indicate one period of the soul: 972 years according to Hesiod or 1,080 years according to the computation of the riddle in Heraclitean generations of 30 years each. In the former case the bird indicates the duration of the peregrination of the soul between two earthly existences, in the latter not only this peregrination but also the preceding earthly life of 108 years.[6] We have supposed that both these figures (972 and 1,080) were rounded off to 1,000 years. This would explain Plato's uncertainty with respect to the question of whether the earthly life must be included in the 1,000

[1] See p. 117-119.
[2] See p. 119-130.
[3] See p. 132-145.
[4] Plato, *Phaedrus* 248e-249b; see p. 134.
[5] See p. 136.
[6] See p. 136-137.

years of the soul.[1] The lifespan of 1,000 years assigned by a number of writers to the phoenix derives, in our opinion, from these considerations concerning the fate of the soul.[2] As a result, this tradition, like that of the 500-year lifespan of the phoenix found in Herodotus and many other authors, must go back ultimately to Hesiod's riddle.

Even when regarded quite apart from the assumed relationship between Hesiod, *frg.* 304, and the periodization of metempsychosis, it may be considered reasonable that the phoenix was related to the death of man and the life thereafter. It is in this sense that the bird believed to find new life by its death, was assigned a role in Classical funerary symbolism [3] and was used symbolically on coins issued at the consecration of Roman Emperors.[4] For the Christians the phoenix constituted a form of natural evidence of the resurrection of Christ as well as of the resurrection of the flesh in general.

The Classical and Early Christian conceptions concerning life after death had an unmistakable influence on the descriptions of the abode of the phoenix. According to Classical thinking, the dead go, either directly or after a long cycle of incarnations, to the Isles of the Blessed or the Elysian Fields; according to Christian thinking, they go to Paradise. The abode of the phoenix, which was originally localized without further qualification in one of the mysterious and fabulous countries of the East, began with ever-increasing clarity to be painted in the likeness of the Classical and Christian abodes of the soul.[5] This tendency was fortified by the association of the phoenix with the Golden Age, as revealed by reports of its appearances at the commencement of a new era or at the start of the reign of a new ruler. On the Isles of the Blessed and similar places the conditions of the Golden Age persist; the two conceptions are similar in most respects. We refer here, for example, to the idea that Cronus, the banished king of the Golden Age, rules over the heroes on the Isles of the Blessed.[6] Pindar says that a soul released from the cycle of metempsychosis goes to Cronus' citadel, the Isle of the Blessed,

[1] See p. 135.
[2] See p. 138.
[3] See pl. XIII and XIV and p. 230-231.
[4] See pl. VI, 1, 2; *cf.* also pl. VI, 10, VII, 1-3, 5-7.
[5] See p. 310-334.
[6] Hesiod, *Erga*, 167-174.

and that the "redeemed" are subsequently honoured as heroes.[1] We recall here too the notion of Cronus as Chronos and his identification with Aion, for whom in turn the phoenix could be a symbol too.[2] There can be no question that the more detailed descriptions of the abode of the phoenix were strongly influenced by the ideas about life after death and the association of the bird with the Golden Age. Lactantius in particular described the abode of the phoenix in great detail, and we have seen that in doing so he based himself on the Judaeo-Christian conception about Paradise while at the same time making use of similar Classical ideas.[3]

In the same way that the abode of the Blessed served as a model for the abode of the phoenix, the food of the Blessed formed a model for its food. The only exceptions to this are found in Ovid and John of Gaza, who believed that the phoenix lived on the same (aromatic) materials as it used for its renewal.[4] Claudian equates the food of the phoenix with what, according to popular philosophical ideas, was consumed by the pure souls: the moisture from the air and the warmth of the sun.[5] In the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* and the Coptic *Sermon on Mary* the reports on the food of the phoenix are determined entirely by Jewish and Christian eschatological ideas. The dew and manna mentioned in these texts form the food the redeemed will enjoy in God's Paradise.[6]

Lactantius too gives the food of the phoenix as dew, the "ambrosial drops of heavenly nectar",[7] but in his case this view has a slightly different derivation than in the texts just mentioned. This is shown by the fact that Lactantius refers only to the food of the newborn phoenix. Despite the many Classical reminiscences, he clearly accepts the Judaeo-Christian conception of dew as an extraordinary, life-saving gift of God.[8] This gift is indispensable, because

[1] Pindar, *Olymp.*, II, 124-130 and *frg.* 133 (Schroeder = Plato, *Meno*, 81c); see p. 135, 138-140.
[2] See p. 300, and e.g. p. 105.
[3] See p. 319-332.
[4] See p. 335-336.
[5] Claudian, *Phoenix*, 13-16; see p. 336, 338-340.
[6] See p. 341-348.
[7] Lactantius, 111-112; see p. 348.
[8] See p. 349-351.

there is no parent to care for the helpless young bird. We have seen that Lactantius drew a parallel between the feeding of the still callow new phoenix and the feeding of the young raven referred to, among other places, in *Ps.* cxlvii (LXX cxlvi).9.[1] The phoenix needs this divine food in our world to reach the state of perfection that characterizes its life in Paradise. We have pointed out that this food must be seen in relation to the sacraments that give the believer strength to continue his struggle to hold to the path leading to Paradise.[2] This interpretation is supported by another aspect of the phoenix myth to which Lactantius assigns great importance: the bird's sexlessness.

In Classical times little attention was given in general to the sex of the phoenix, which is natural because its genesis was considered to be asexual.[3] The authors who do comment on the sex of the phoenix did so in terms of a particular interpretation. There are some indications that the phoenix was seen as hermaphroditic, possibly because it was taken among the Hermetics and Gnostics as a symbol of the highest being or of the Primeval Man, both considered to be bisexual.[4]

The intentions of certain Christian authors who discuss the sex of the phoenix are easier to grasp. The inferred asexuality of the phoenix was elevated by some to an essential characteristic to make the bird more suitable as support for their theses. The Monophysites, for instance, used the phoenix as a demonstration of the one nature of Christ.[5] The same holds for Vincentius Victor in his discussion of the asexuality of the corporeal form of the soul.[6] In Lactantius, who emphasizes the uncertainty concerning the sex of the phoenix, and in Zeno of Verona, who says that the phoenix is for itself both sexes, the background is again formed by the inferred asexuality of the phoenix.[7] What they wish to stress is that the phoenix is elevated

[1] See p. 352-355.
[2] See p. 356.
[3] See p. 360.
[4] See p. 364-367.
[5] See p. 359.
[6] Augustinus, *De anima et eius origine*, IV, 20, 33; see p. 363-364.
[7] Lactantius, 163-170; Zeno of Verona, *Tract.*, I, 16, 9 (*PL* 11, 384A); see p. 365-366.

above sexuality, simply because for them the bird is a symbol of the state of the redeemed in the eschatological glory. This state will be characterized by a complete abolition of sexuality: "they are like angels in heaven" (*Matth.* xxii.30). Zeno of Verona had in mind only life in the heavenly Paradise starting after death, but Lactantius thought of the realization of this eschatological state before death, in other words in this earthly life. For him the phoenix is the symbol of the *virgo* who has vanquished sexuality and in this life already lives the *vita angelica*.[1]

Although it has repeatedly become clear in the course of this study how often a symbolic meaning was assigned to the phoenix in Classical and Early Christian times, it was not our intention to give a systematic description of this symbolism. What we have attempted to show is that the symbolic interpretation of the phoenix had a strong influence on the development of the myth. The strongest impulses in this direction prove to have originated from the two main themes around which the highly varied symbolism of the phoenix is centred: the renewal of time and the renewal of life after death.

[1] See p. 374-375, 383-385.

THE PHOENIX IN CLASSICAL AND EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

Documentation and Plates I-XL

FRONTISPIECE

Fragment of apsidal mosaic, from Old St. Peter's, Museo di Roma, Rome; fourth century A.D.

Phoenix with radiate nimbus, striding to r., within a *tondo* serving as second nimbus. Original position in the fourth-century mosaic uncertain. In the mosaic of Innocent III (late twelfth century), which replaced the original one and was itself destroyed in 1592, the phoenix was situated in the palm tree beside Innocent III and another phoenix (certainly medieval) occurred in the palm tree beside the figure of *Ecclesia Romana* (see references below). Since the earlier phoenix is ambulant, it is not likely that it was shown in a palm tree, even if the original composition was a representation of the *Traditio legis* as argued by Schumacher. The radiate nimbus proves that this phoenix was not medieval but Early Christian (see p. 251, n. 2). The most comparable example is the phoenix of Aquileia (see pl. XXI), which is also placed in a *tondo*.

Photo: Oscar Savio, Rome.

Wilpert, *MM*, I, 361-367, fig. 114 (mosaic in Old St. Peter's); A. Muñoz, *Musaici della vecchia Basilica Vaticana nel Museo di Roma*, in *Bollettino dei Musei Communali di Roma*, 6, 1959, 8-13; W. N. Schumacher, *Altchrististliche "Giebelkompositionen"*, in *Mitt. des Deutsch. Archeol. Inst.* Roem. Abt., 67, 1960, 133-149; *idem, Eine römische Apsiskomposition, Röm. Quartalschrift*, 54, 1959, 137-202. W. Oakeshott, *The mosaics of Rome from the third to the the fourteenth centuries*, London, 1967, 67, is of the opinion that the bird represents the dove that settled on the shoulder of Innocent III when he was elected pope (a view which was commonly held in the late Middle Ages). See also above p. 249, n. 2, and p. 251, n. 1.

Pl. I, 1

Mural painting in tomb of Irenifer. Dêr el Medineh; 19th dynasty (*ca.* 1345-1200 B.C.).

Deceased in boat standing in front of *benu* with sun disk on its head.

Photo: Library of the University of Amsterdam.

B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1960, 272-273, no. 290. Reproduction in J. Vandier, *Egypt. Paintings from tombs and temples*, Paris, 1954, pl. IV; A. Lothe, *Chefs-d'oeuvre de la peinture Egyptienne*, Paris, 1954, pl. 152, and Ch. Desroches-Noblecourt, *Graf- en tempelschilderingen in Egypte*, (Unesco Kunstpockets, 1), Amsterdam, 1962, pl. 25. See also above p. 15, 239, 252, and 402.

Pl. I, 2

Mural painting in the tomb of the royal scribe Harsiesi in Hiw (Diospolis Parva); now destroyed. Ptolemaic, probably from the second century B.C.

Benu in willow tree next to grave of Osiris.

Photo: reproduced from Gardner Wilkinson.

Porter and Moss, V, Oxford, 1937, 107-109; J. Gardner Wilkinson, *The manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians*, new ed. revised and corrected by S. Birch, III, London, 1878, 349, fig. 588; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Diospolis Parva. The cemeteries of Abadiyeh and Hu (1898-1899)*, London, 1901, 54-55; A. Erman-H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, Tübingen, 1923, XVIII, and 308, fig. 139; Kees, *Götterglaube*, 88, fig. 7. See also above p. 16, 239, 252, and 402.

Pl. II

Liturgical garment from Saqqara, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (J.E. no. 59117). First or second century A.D.

Back view of the garment.

Photo: reproduced from Perdrizet, pl. VII.

P. Perdrizet, *La tunique liturgique historiée de Saqqara*, in *MMAI*, 34, 1934, 97-128, pl. VII, VIII. See also above p. 16, 238-243, 247 (n. 4), and 298.

Pl. III

Liturgical garment from Saqqara (detail of pl. II).

Benu-phoenix on hill of creation, with nimbus around and seven rays emanating from its head.

Photo: Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Pl. IV

Mural painting from the temple of Isis in Pompei, National Museum, Naples; first century A.D.

The adoration of Osiris. Against a background of mountains and scattered buildings rises the sacred gate consisting of two sarcophagus-shaped columns on rather high pedestals: the columns support a simple architrave. In the gate stands an open sarcophagus on a pedestal; around the mummy's waist a girdle with a large knot. On top of the sarcophagus a large bird with extended wings, the head carrying a *ureus* with a solar disk and a lunar crescent. The bird is probably meant to represent the phoenix, but see p. 242, n. 4.

Photo: Tran Tam Tinh, Quebec.

V. Tran Tam Tihn, *Le culte d'Isis à Pompéi*, Paris, 1964, 142-143, pl. X, 2.

Pl. V

The Adoration of Osiris (detail of pl. IV).

The phoenix (?) on the sarcophagus of Osiris.

Photo: Tran Tam Tinh, Quebec.

Pl. VI, 1

Aureus of Hadrian; A.D. 118.

Obv.: DIVI TRAIANO PARTH. PATRI. Bust, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r.

Rev.: No legend. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus, standing, r.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, II, 343, no. 27; *CBM*, III, 245, no. 48; G. Camozzi, *La Consecratio di Traiano*, in *RIN*, 14, 1901, 11-26; *idem*, *La Consecratio nelle monete da Cesare ad Adriano*, *ibid.*, 51-53; see above p. 237, 245, and 419.

Pl. VI, 2

Aureus of Hadrian; A.D. 118.

Obv.: DIVI TRAIANO PARTH. AUG. PATRI. Bust, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r.
Rev.: No legend. Phoenix with radiate nimbus, standing on a branch (of palm or laurel), r.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, II, 343, no. 28; *CBM*, III, 245, no. 49; Camozzi, *o.c.*, see no. 1 above; and also p. 237, 245, 246 (n. 4), and 419.

Pl. VI, 3

Aureus of Hadrian; A.D. 121/122.

Obv.: IMP. CAESAR TRAIAN. HADRIANUS AUG. Bust, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r.
Rev.: P. M. TR. P. COS. III. SAEC. AUR. *Aion* or Hadrian as the ruler of the Golden Age, standing r. in the oval of the zodiac, and holding phoenix on globe in l. hand.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, II, 356, no. 136 (also *denarius*); *CBM*, III, 278, no. 312; D. Levi, *Aion*, in *Hesperia*, 13, 1944, 287-295; see also above p. 105, 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VI, 4

Alexandrian coin of Hadrian; A.D. 137/138.

Obv.: AVTKAICTPA AΔPIANOCCEB. Head, r., laureate.
Rev.: ΠPONOIA. Pronoia standing l., clad in chiton and peplos, wears wreath, holds phoenix (l., radiate) in r. hand and long sceptre transversely. In front KB.
L

Photo: British Museum.

R. Stuart Poole, *Catalogue of the Coins of Alexandria and the Nomes*, London, 1892, p. 72, nrs. 598-600; J. Vogt, *Die alexandrinischen Münzen*, Stuttgart, 1924, I, 109-110, II, 60; *cf.* I, 110: "*Die Pronoia des 22. Jahrs*

bezieht sich daher wohl auf die im Februar 138 vollzogene Adoption des Antoninus Pius durch Hadrian, des Marcus und des Verus durch Pius. Das Symbol des Phönix verkündet den durch die Adoptionen gesicherten Bestand der römischen Herrschaft"; J. G. Milne, *Catalogue of Alexandrian coins in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford, 1933, 36, nrs. 1560-1568.

Pl. VI, 5-7

Alexandrian bronze coin without name of Emperor (Hadrian?, Antoninus Pius?). Second century A.D.; but ascribed to Caligula by several scholars.

Obv.: Phoenix-*benu* standing l., on branch, two feathers projecting from the back of its head, no nimbus.

Rev.: Apis r., disk between horns; on side crescent. Above: ∟B.

Photo: British Museum (nrs. 2634, 2635, 2637).

St. Poole, *Catalogue*, 337, nrs. 2632-2637; G. Dattari, *Appunti di numismatica alessandrina*, in *RIN*, 13, 1900, 381-382 (Caligula: *con una certa reserva*); G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek coins in the Hunterian collection*, III, Glasgow, 1905, 406, no. 28 (Caligula: "*not certain*"); Vogt, *Münzen*, I, 22, II, 4 (Caligula: "*nicht sicher zu erweisen*"); Milne, *Catalogue*, 125, nrs. 5246-5248 (not from the time of Caligula, *cf.* p. XX (21): "*for the most part of later style*"). See also above p. 245-246.

Pl. VI, 8

Alexandrian coin of Antoninus Pius; A.D. 138/139.

Obv.: AVTK...AΔP ANTωNINOS EVCEB. Head of emperor, r.
Rev.: AIωN. Phoenix, r., with seven-rayed nimbus around head. In field: ∟B.

Photo: Hunter Coin Cabinet, Glasgow.

Macdonald, *Catalogue*, III, 459, no. 404; Vogt, *Münzen*, I, 115, II, 63; Milne, *Catalogue*, 40, nrs. 1600-1604. See above p. 70, 105, 117, 244, and 417.

Pl. VI, 9

Alexandrian coin of Antoninus Pius; A.D. 142/143.

Obv.: ANTωNINOC CEB. EUCEB. Head of Antoninus, r., laureate.

Rev.: AIωN. Phoenix, r., with seven-rayed nimbus around head. In field: L S.

Photo: British Museum.

Poole, *Catalogue,* 117, no. 1004; Vogt, *Münzen,* I, 115-116, II, 68; Milne, *Catalogue,* 42, nrs. 1734-1737. See above p. 70, 105, 117, 244, and 417.

Pl. VI, 10

Denarius of Antoninus Pius; A.D. 141.

Obv.: DIVA FAUSTINA. Bust, draped, r., hair waved and coiled on top of head.
Rev.: AETERNITAS. Aeternitas, draped, standing, l., holding phoenix with nimbus on extended r. hand, and raising fold of skirt with l.

Photo: British Museum (no. 354).

RIC, III, 69, no. 347; *CBM,* IV, 54, nrs. 354-357. See above p. 419.

Pl. VII, 1

Denarius of Antoninus Pius; A.D. 141 or later.

Obv.: DIVA FAUSTINA. Bust r., draped, hair waved and coiled on top of head.
Rev.: AETERNITAS. Aeternitas standing, l., holding phoenix on globe on extended r. hand and raising fold of skirt with l.

Photo: British Museum.

CBM, IV, 54, no. 358; see also 154, no. 1023; Similar reverse but with legend AETERNITAS S. C. in *CBM,* IV, 239, nrs. 1490-1492, 240, nrs. 1493, 1494, 247, nrs. 1544-1547; *RIC,* III, 162, no. 1105 (*Sestertius*) 166, no. 1157 (*dupondius* or *as*). See above p. 243 (n. 2), and 419

Pl. VII, 2

Sestertius of Antoninus Pius; after A.D. 141.

Obv.: DIVA FAUSTINA. Bust, r., draped, hair waved and coiled on top of head.

Rev.: AETERNITAS S.C. Aeternitas, draped, seated, l., on throne, holding phoenix (with nimbus, r.) on globe on r. hand and tranverse sceptre in l.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, III, 161, no. 1103A; *CBM*, IV, 238, no. 1482 (*ibid.*, 239, nrs. 1483-1489 with phoenix standing l. (no. 1487 standing front), and 248, nrs. 1549-1550). See above p. 243 (n. 2), and 419.

Pl. VII, 3

Sestertius of Antoninus Pius; after A.D. 141.

Obv.: DIVA AUG. FAUSTINA. Bust, r., draped, hair waved and coiled on top of head.
Rev.: AETERNITAS S.C. Aeternitas, draped, seated, l., on low seat, holding phoenix on globe on r. hand and transverse sceptre in l.

Photo: British Museum

RIC, III, 162, no. 1103B (same reverse: no. 1104); *CBM*, IV, 228, no. 1415A. For a *dupondius* or *as* of this type see *RIC*, III, 166, no. 1156. See above p. 243 (n. 2), and 419.

Pl. VII, 4

As of Antoninus Pius; A.D. 159/160.

Obv.: ANTONINUS AUG. PIUS P.P. Head, laureate, r.
Rev.: TR. POT. XXIIII COS. IIII S.C. Aeternitas, draped, standing front, head l., holding caduceus in extended r. hand and phoenix on globe in l.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, III, 154, no. 1051; *CBM*, IV, 363, nrs. 2115, 2116 (*cf. RIC.* III, 131, no. 833 for a similar *as* of A.D. 145/146). See above p. 243 (n. 2).

Pl. VII, 5

Bronze medallion of Antoninus Pius; *ca.* A.D. 141.

Obv.: DIVA AUG FAUSTINA. Bust of Faustina I, r., draped, veiled.

Rev.: AETERNITAS. Aeternitas, standing front, head l., holding nimbate phoenix on globe on r. hand, leaning with l. on column.

Photo: Royal Library, Brussels.

J. M. C. Toynbee, *Roman medallions*, New York, 1944, 102, n. 56, pl. XLI, 4. Another medallion is mentioned in *RIC*, III, 165, note, and in *CBM*, IV, 246, no. *: *Obv.* DIVA FAUSTINA. Bust, veiled, r. *Rev.*: S. C. Aeternitas standing l., holding phoenix on r. hand, altar l. See above p. 243 (n. 2), and 419.

Pl. VII, 6

Aureus of Marcus Aurelius; A.D. 176-180.

Obv.: DIVAE FAUSTINAE PIAE. Bust, r., veiled, diademed.
Rev.: MATRI CASTRORUM. Faustina (II), draped, seated, l., on low seat, holding phoenix with radiate nimbus on globe, r., in r. hand and sceptre, almost vertical, in l., in front of her, l., three standards set on base.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, III, 274, no. 751 (no. 752 *denarius* of the same type); *CBM*, IV, 488, no. 704. See also *RIC*, III 274, no. 753 (rev. similar, but with two standards), no. 754 (*quinarius*, sceptre beside throne), 350, no. 1711 and no. 1712 (*sestertii*, three and two standards, respectively), 349, no. 1696 (rev. leg.: AETERNITAS S.C., no standards). See above p. 243 (n. 2), and 419.

Pl. VII, 7

Denarius of Marcus Aurelius; A.D. 176-180.

Obv.: DIVA FAUSTINA PIA. Bust, r.
Rev.: AETERNITAS. Aeternitas, veiled, draped, standing front, head l., holding phoenix on globe on r. hand and resting l. arm on column.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, III, 273, no. 740; *CBM*, IV, 489, nrs. 709-710; a *sestertius* of the same type but with rev. leg. AETERNITAS S. C. in *RIC*, III, 349, no. 1693. See above p. 243 (n. 2), and 419.

Pl. VII, 8

Denarius of Julia Domna; A.D. 196-211.

Obv.: IULIA AUGUSTA. Bust, cuirassed, draped, r.

Rev.: MA[TRI CASTROR]UM. Julia Domna, veiled, draped, seated l. on throne, holding phoenix (standing r.) on globe on r. hand and sceptre, pointed slightly upward to r. in l. In front of her, l., two standards.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, IV, 1, 169, no. 568 (no. 569 similar, but three standards); *CBM,* V, 164, no. 58. See above p. 243 (n. 2).

Pl. VII, 9

Aureus of Trebonius Gallus; A.D. 251-253.

Obv.: IMP. CAE. C. VIB. TREB. GALLUS AUG. Bust, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r.

Rev.: AETERNITAS AUGG. Aeternitas, standing l., holding phoenix (standing r.) on globe on l. hand, raising skirt with r.

Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Cabinet des Médailles, no. 1322).

RIC, IV, 3, 161, no. 17; see also *ibid.,* 162, no. 30 for an *Antoninianus* with similar reverse and 171, no. 102 for a *sestertius* with a slightly different reverse. Similar coins were issued by the emperors Volusianus (A.D. 251-253) and Aemilianus (A.D. 253), *cf. ibid.,* 176, no. 154 and 201, no. 55. See above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 1

Antoninianus of Aemilianus; A.D. 253.

Obv.: IMP. AEMILIANUS PIUS FEL. AUG. Bust, radiate, draped, cuirassed.

Rev.: ROMAE AETERN. Roma, standing l., holding phoenix on globe in r. hand and sceptre transversely in l.; at her side, r., shields.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, IV, 3, 195, no. 9; see *ibid.,* 199, no. 38 for a similar *sestertius.* See also above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 2

Bronze medallion of Constantine the Great, A.D. 326.

Obv.: CONSTANTINUS MAX AUG. Head of Constantine, laureate, r.

Rev.: GLORIA SAECULI VIRTUS CAESS. Emperor sitting on couch, l., holding sceptre in l. hand, offering globe with phoenix (r., seven-rayed nimbus) to Caesar standing in front of him, symbol of victory on l. shoulder; panther crouching at feet of Emperor.

Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Cabinet des Médailles, no. 663).

RIC, VII, 328, no. 279; J. Maurice, *Numismatique constantinienne*, I, Paris, 1908, (reprint: Brussels, 1965), 104; A. Alföldi, *On the foundation of Constantinople: a few notes*, in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 37, 1947, 15. See also above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 3

Bronze coin of Constans I; A.D. 346-350, from the mint of Aquileia.

Obv.: DN CONSTANS PF AUG. Bust of emperor, r., draped, pearl-diademed.

Rev.: FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Emperor holding nimbed phoenix on globe on r. hand and labarum in l., standing l. in galley steered by Victoria, seated l. at helm.

Photo: British Museum.

P. V. Hill, J. P. C. Kent and R. A. C. Carson, *Late Roman bronze Coinage, A.D. 324-498*, London, 1960, 65, nrs. 889-895. Similar, but in details slightly different coins came from the mints of Treves, Lyons, Arles, Rome, Siscia, Thessalonica, Heraclea Thracica, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria; see *ibid.*, 108, 46 (nrs. 40-46a, *cf.* no. 4 here), 49 (nos. 183-195), 54 (nrs. 404-406a), 59 (nrs. 606-629), 69 (nrs. 1139-1147a, 1150-1158), 77 (nrs. 1637-1647), 83 (nrs. 1890-1892), 86 (nrs. 2022-2027), 92 (nrs. 2295-2298), 96 (nrs. 2484-2485), 99 (nrs. 2620-2622), 103 (nrs. 2830-2835). For the coins with the legend FEL (-icium) TEMP(orum) REPARATIO, see H. Mattingly, "*FEL. TEMP. REPARATIO*", in *Numismatic Chronicle*, 5th Ser., 13, 1933, 182-202, pl. XVIII, nrs. 1-11. See above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 4

Bronze coin of Constantius II; A.D. 346-350, from the mint of Treves.

Obv.: DN CONSTANTIUS PF AUG. Bust of emperor, r., draped, pearl-diademed.

Rev.: FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Emperor holding nimbed phoenix on globe on r. hand and labarum in l., standing l. in galley steered by Victoria, seated l. at helm.

Photo: British Museum.

Hill, Kent and Carson, 46 (nrs. 40-46a), for similar coins of Constantius II and Constans I from other mints, see above on no. 3. The same obverse and reverse on a medallion of Constantius II, *ca.* A.D. 357, *cf.* L. M. Tocci, *I medaglioni romani e i contornati del Medagliere Vaticano*, Città del Vaticano, 1965, 191, no. 146, pl. LX. See also above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 5

Bronze coin of Constans I; A.D. 346-350, from the mint of Treves.

Obv.: DN CONSTANS PF AUG. Bust of emperor, draped, pearl-diademed.

Rev.: FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus, standing to r. on globe.

Photo: British Museum.

Hill, Kent and Carson, 46, nrs. 32-39. Similar reverse on coins of Constans I and Constantius II from the mints of Lyons, Constantinople Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria, *cf. ibid.*, 49 (no. 182), 54 (no. 403), 86 (2019-2021), 92 (no. 2294), 96 (nrs. 2482-2483), 99 (nrs. 2618-2619), 103 (nrs. 2827-2829). See also above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 6

Bronze coin of Constantius II; A.D. 346-350, from the mint of Lyons.

Obv.: DN CONSTANTIUS PF AUG. Bust of emperor, draped, pearl-diademed.

Rev.: FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus, standing to r. on globe.

Photo: British Museum.

Hill, Kent and Carson, 49, no. 182. For similar coins of Constantius II and Constans ,see reference for no. 5 here. The gem in *Gemmae selectae antiquae e museo Jacobi de Wilde*, Amsterdam, 1703, 66, no. 74, pl. 20, is in all probability a modern forgery made after a coin of this type; it shows the phoenix on a globe, with the legend AETERNITAS C.S.F. See also above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 7

Bronze coin of Constantius II; A.D. 346-350, from the mint of Siscia.

Obv.: DN CONSTANTIUS PF AUG. Bust of emperor, r., draped, pearl-diademed.
Rev.: FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus, standing to r. on pyramid-shaped pyle of rocks.

Photo: British Museum.

Hill, Kent and Carson, 69, nrs. 1123-1138. For coins of Constantius II and Constans I, from the mints of Treves, Arles, and Rome, *cf. ibid.*, 108, and 46 (nrs. 32-39; see no. 8 here), 54, (nrs. 402-403), 59 (no. 605). See also above p. 117, 180, and 417.

Pl. VIII, 8

Bronze coin of Constans I; A.D. 346-350, from the mint of Treves.

Obv.: DN CONSTANS PF AUG. Bust of emperor, r., draped and pearl-diademed.
Rev.: FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus, standing to r. on pyle of rocks.

Photo: Koninklijk Penningkabinet, The Hague.

F. Imhoof-Blumer and O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums*, Leipzig, 1889, 72, pl. XII, no. 25; Hill, Kent and Carson, 46, nrs. 32-39. For similar coins of Constans I and Constantius II from other mints, *cf.* reference for no. 7 here. See also above p. 117, 180, and 417.

Pl. VIII, 9

Siliqua of Theodosius, A.D. 378-383.

Obv.: DN THEODOSIUS PF AUG. Bust, pearl-diademed, draped, cuirassed, r.

Rev.: PERPETUETAS. Phoenix with rayed nimbus, standing l., on globe.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, IX, 25, no. 56c; see also *ibid.*, no. 56a and no. 56b for similar coins of Gratianus and Valentinianus II, respectively (from the same mint, Treves, and the same period). See also above p. 117, 243 (n. 2), and 417.

Pl. VIII, 10

Bronze coin of Valentinanus II; A.D. 383-388.

Obv.: DN VALENTINIANUS PF AUG. Bust, pearl-diademed, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: VIRTUS AUGGG. Emperor standing l., head r., on ship, holding phoenix on globe in r. hand and standard in l. His right foot on captive; Victory on helm.

Photo: British Museum.

RIC, IX, 186, no. 61a; see also *ibid.*, no. 61b and no. 61c: similar coins of Theodosius and Arcadius, respectively. See for coins of the same Emperors (*ca.* A.D. 388) with the same reverse but with a different obverse (GLORIA ROMANORUM): Hill, Kent and Carson, 81, nrs. 1848-1855. See also p. 243 (n. 2).

Pl. IX, 1

Magical amulet. Collection Seyrig, no. 36; haematite. First or second century A.D.(?).

Obv.: Harpocrates to front, kneeling with l. knee on lotus, r. leg extended backward. R. hand raised, palm forward; disk over head, star at l. At r. phoenix with radiate head, behind and below the bird uncertain cuttings perhaps intended for a tree, on which the phoenix perches.

Rev.: The name Ororiouth.

Photo: The Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Mediaeval Archaeology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

C. Bonner, *Studies in magical amulets, chiefly Graeco-Egyptian,* (University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series, XLIX), Ann Arbor-London-Oxford, 1950, 143, 286, no. 195, pl. IX; for Ororiouth, *ibid.*, 84-85. See above p. 243, 246, 250, and 301 (n. 3).

Pl. IX, 2

Magical amulet. British Museum (Inv. no. 56109 = G. 109), London; carnelian. Date unknown (probably first centuries A.D.).

Obv.: Phoenix within an oval, no nimbus or rays, but probably sun disk on head. The area outside the oval is divided into four compartments: above l., Harpocrates on the lotus flower; above r., winged serpent; below l. (damaged), crocodile; below r., hawk.

Rev.: The so-called Chabrach formula: XAB/RAXΦN/ECXHPΦ/[I]XPOΦNY/[P]ΩΦΩX/ΩBΩ/X; for this formula, see Bonner *Amulets*, 141-142.

Photo: British Museum.

A. A. Barb, *Abraxas-Studien*, in *Hommages à Waldemar Deonna*, (Coll. Latomus, XXVIII), Brussels, 1957, 81-86 pl. XVIII, 1, 2, 3. See here p. 301.

Pl. IX, 3

Magical amulet, Numismatic Museum, Athens; chalcedony. First or second century A.D.(?).

Obv.: Within ouroborus phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus and a backward-projecting feather at its head, striding to r.; at side, magical characters.

Rev.: Magical inscription in six lines: αιανακβα/σαλαμαζα αμ/οραχθη βαμαια/ζα αζαηλ Λυκαη/λ βελιαμτο τρ/ω αρμα Φρη.

Photo: Ph. Derchain, Cologne.

Ph. Derchain, *Intailles magiques du Musée de Numismatiques d'Athènes*, in *Chronique d'Égypte*, 39, (nrs. 77-78), 1964, 186, no. 14. See above p. 244.

PL. X, 1

Magical amulet. Present location unknown; jaspis. Date unknown (first centuries A.D.).

Obv.: Phoenix with nimbus and ten rays emanating from its head, going to l.

Rev.: *Chnoubis* on altar. On the edge of the gem: XPOYBIS.

Photo: Reproduced from Caylus.

Le Comte de Caylus, *Recueil d'Antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines et gauloises*, V, Paris, 1762, 70, pl. XXIII, 5, 6. See above p. 246 (n. 4), and 258.

PL. X, 2

Graeco-Roman gem, State Museums, Berlin (Inv. no. 8559); red jaspis.

Phoenix standing r., with six feathers on its head, of which the fourth from the front has a bulbous tip, making it unlikely that an aureole was intended.

Photo: made after a plaster cast provided by the State Museums, Berlin.

F. Imhoof-Blumer and O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums*, Leipzig, 1889, 157, pl. XXVI, 22; A. Furtwängler, *Beschreibung der geschnittenen Steine im Antiquarium*, Berlin, 1896, 313, no. 8559. See above p. 234.

PL. XI, 1

Magical amulet. Collection Bonner, no. 29; haematite. First or second century A.D.(?).

Obv.: Phoenix with seven rays around head, standing on rounded object (egg?) which rests on altar made of a single column supporting a broad top. Above, scarab; at each side, descending, a bird, a scorpion, a cobra; crocodile under altar. Two curves like a reversed S between the scorpions and the phoenix may be meant for small snakes or worms.

Rev.: πέπτε, with Chnoubis symbol below.

Photo: Reproduced from Bonner, pl. V, no. 103.

Bonner, *Amulets*, 60, 270, no. 103, pl. V. See above p. 196, 243, 244.

PL. XI, 2

Magical amulet. Formerly in the Sarrafian Collection; haematite. First or second century A.D.(?).

Obv.: Similar to the preceding except in two points. The animals at the sides, in descending order, are birds scorpions, crabs, and cobras; and instead of the worm-like objects between the scorpions and the phoenix, there are two signs consisting of a broken line crossed diagonally by a shorter line.

Rev.: πέπτε, below which are two attempts at the Chnoubis symbol, the first one wrongly made.

Photo: Reproduced from Bonner, pl. V, no. 104.

Bonner, *Amulets*, 60-61, 270, no. 104, pl. V. See above p. 196, 243, 244.

PL. XI, 3

Magical amulet. Collection Seyrig (no number); haematite. First or second century A.D.(?).

Obv.: Phoenix standing to l. on globe (egg of myrrh?); seven-rayed elliptical nimbus round head. Above, a scarab; at each side, descending, a bird resembling a crow, a scorpion, and a cobra. At bottom, a crocodile to r.

Rev.: πέπτε.

Photo: Reproduced from Bonner, pl. XXI, no. 392.

Bonner, *Amulets*, 321, no. 392, pl. XXI. See above p. 196, 243, 244.

PL. XI, 4

Magical amulet. Collection Seyrig, no. 5; haematite. First or second century A.D.(?).

Obv.: Phoenix standing to l. on crocodile, head encircled by nimbus with seven rays. Above, scarab; at each side, descending, a

bird, a scorpion, and a snake(?). Opposite the phoenix's feet are broken lines that may be intended for the worm-like objects of the gem on pl. XI, no. 1.

Rev.: πέπτε, the letters arranged in a descending column.

Photo: The Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Mediaeval Archaeology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Bonner, *Amulets*, 270, no. 105, pl. V. See above p. 243 and 244.

Pl. XI, 5

Magical amulet. Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des médailles et antiquités (Fr. 2884), Paris; haematite. First or second century A.D.(?).

Rev.: Phoenix standing to l. on crocodile; six-rayed nimbus. Above, scarab; at each side, descending, a bird, a scorpion, and, probably, a snake.

Obv.: στό/μαχ/ε πέ/πτε.

Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, Paris, 1964, 149, no. 193 (with an erroneous interpretation). See above p. 243, 246 (n. 4).

Pl. XI, 6

Magical amulet. Collection Seyrig, no. 6; haematite. Date unknown.

Obv.: Long-necked bird, probably meant for a phoenix, as in the preceding numbers. The bird stands on a scorpion the tail of which is prolonged upward to an unnatural length. Numerous short lines, unexplained, in field.

Rev.: πέπτε.

Photo: The Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Mediaeval Archaeology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Bonner, *Amulets*, 270, no. 106, pl. V.

Pl. XI, 7

Magical amulet, present location and date unknown; heliotrope.

Long-necked phoenix, as may be concluded from the seven rays on its head; standing to r., at side magical characters.

Photo: reproduced from Chiflet.

J. Chifletius, *Joannis Macarii Canonici Ariensis Abraxas seu Apistopistus: quae est Antiquaria de gemmis Basilidianis disquisitio. Accedit Abraxas Proteus, seu multiformis gemmae Basilidianae portentosa varietas*, Antverpiae, 1657, 68-70, pl. IV, no. 17; J. Gronovius, *Abrahami Gorlaei Antverpiani Dactyliothecae pars secunda*, Lugduni Batavorum, 1695, no. 335. See above p. 250.

Pl. XI, 8

Magical amulet, present location and date unknown; onyx.

Ibis-like bird, standing r. on crocodile, probably meant for a phoenix, *cf.* nrs. 4 and 5 above.

Photo: reproduced from Chiflet.

Chifletius, *Abraxas*, 68, pl. IV, no. 18.

Pl. XII

Wall painting in the *Cappella Greca*, Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome. First half of third century A.D.

Phoenix with eight- or nine-rayed nimbus, in flames.

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome.

A. Ferrua, *Lavori nelle catacombe*, in *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 30, 1954, 158 and 157, fig. 2; *idem*, *Tre note d'iconografia paleocristiana*, in *Miscellanea G. Belvederi*, (Coll. "Amici delle Catacombe", XXIII), Città del Vaticano, 1954-1955, 273-277, fig. 1; P. Testini, *Le catacombe e gli antichi cimiteri cristiani in Roma*, Bologna, 1966, 271, fig. 115. See p. 230, 246 (n. 4), 250 (n. 1).

Pl. XIII

Phoenix mosaic, from the floor of a cave tomb at Urfa (Edessa), Turkey; A.D. 235-236.

Phoenix without nimbus standing on a wreathed pillar (betyle), symbolic of the soul; before it a conventional stone tomb. The inscription at the top of the picture reads: "Phoenix", the one below the r. tree (trans. Segal): "In the year five hundred/and forty seven/ made by Bar Šᵉmeš, son of/BRQ' (is) this/tomb for myself and for myself and for my children as a/tomb".

Photo: Reproduced from *Vanished Civilizations* by courtesy of Thames and Hudson, London.

J. B. Segal, *New mosaics from Edessa*, in *Archaeology*, 12, 1959, 150-157; *idem*, *New Syriac inscriptions from Edessa*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 22, 1959, 35-36 *(inscription)*; *idem*, *The Sabian mysteries. The planet cult of ancient Harran*, in *Vanished Civilizations. Forgotten people of the ancient world*, edited by E. Bacon, London, 1963, 214 and 208 (beautiful colour plate); see also *idem*, *Edessa, "The blessed City"*, Oxford, 1970, pl. 43; J. Leroy *Nouvelles découvertes archéologiques relatives à Édesse*, in *Syria*, 38, 1961, 160, and J. Starcky, *Édesse et l'Orient chrétien*, in *Bible et Terre Sainte*, 119, March, 1970, 7. See also above p. 231, 234, 245, and 419.

Pl. XIV

Urn of M. Marcius Hermas. Palazzo ducale, Urbino; from S. Agnese fuori le Mura, Rome. Second half of the third century A.D.

Two phoenixes on their pyres.

Photo: Foto Moderna, Urbino.

R. Fabretti, *Inscriptionum antiquarum quae in aedibus paternis asservantur explicatio*, Romae, 1702, 378, no. XXXI; *CIL*, VI, 3, 1886, 2287, no. 22075; Ferrua, *Tre note d'iconografia paleocristiana*, 276-277, fig. 3. See above p. 230-231, 250 (n. 3), and 419.

Pl. XV

Drawing in the tomb of the *Valerii* in the Vatican necropolis, Rome; *ca.* A.D. 300.

Head of Christ, the upper part of which makes a transition into two birds joined to form one body; many inscriptions are added (for these, see p. 159-160).

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome (*cf.* Guarducci, pl. 31, who indicates that this photo has been retouched).

M. Guarducci, *Cristo e San Pietro in un documento precostantiniano della necropoli vaticana*, Rome, 1953, *passim*, pls. 30-43; severely criticized by Ferrua, *Tre note d'iconografia paleocristiana*, 276, n. 5. See p. 159-161, 250 (n. 1), and 284.

Pl. XVI

The same as pl. XV, but not retouched.

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome.

Pl. XVII, 1

Calendar of A.D. 354, Barb. Lat. 2154 (formerly XXXI, 39), fol. 7 *(Natales caesarum)*, Vatican Library, Rome.

Constantius II, nimbed, phoenix with rayed nimbus on globe on r. hand, l. hand raised.

Photo: Vatican Library.

J. Strzygowski, *Die Calenderbilder des Chronographen vom Jahre* 354, (Jahrb. des kais. Deutschen Archäol. Inst., Erstes Ergänzungsheft), Berlin, 1888, 33-35, pl. IX; C. Nordenfalk, *Der Kalender vom Jahre* 354 *und die lateinische Buchmalerei des IV. Jahrhunderts*, (Göteborgs Kungl. Vetensk.- och Vitterhets-samhälles, Handlingar, Femte Följden, Ser. A, Band 5, no. 2), Gothenburg, 1936; H. Stern, *Le Calendrier de* 354. *Étude sur son texte et sur ses illustrations*, (Inst. franç. d'Arch. de Beyrouth, Bibl. arch. et hist., LV), Paris, 1953, 145-152, pl. IV, 2. See above p. 243 (n. 2), 251 (n. 1).

Pl. XVII, 2

Graffito, Catacomb of Callixt, Rome; middle of the fourth century A.D.

Phoenix with nimbus and four rays, striding to l.

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome.

Wilpert, *MM*, I, 104, fig. 32; see also E. Josi, *Fenice*, in *Enciclopedia cattolica*, V. Città del Vaticano, 1950, 1152. See above p. 246.

Pl. XVIII, 1

Floor mosaic in one of the apses of the Hall of the Great Hunting Scene of the Roman Villa at Casale near Piazza Armerina, Sicily; second half of the fourth century (?, see below).

Burning phoenix on egg-shaped nest, symbolizing Egypt or Arabia in a representation of Africa or, more probably, the Earth.

Photo: Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome.

G. V. Gentili, *La villa romana del Casale di Piazza Armerina*, in *Atti del primo congresso nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana, Rome*, 1952, 171-181, pl. XXVII, fig. 2; *idem*, *Die Villa Erculia in Piazza Armerina*, Stuttgart, s.a., fig. 5, pl. XXXVI; B. Pace, *I mosaici di Piazza Armerina*, Rome, 1955, 68. The dating of these mosaics is still debated: Gentili, *Villa Erculia*, 33-76 (summary on 74-76): period of the Tetrarchs; Pace, 105: fourth century or the beginning of the fifth; *cf.* also Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich*, (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, 2), Berlin, 1967, 129-131: second quarter of the fourth century. See p. 231, 247, and 250 (n. 1).

Pl. XVIII, 2

Detail of no. 1: burning phoenix.

Photo: Giovanni Amalfi e Figlio, Piazza Armerina.

Pl. XIX

Orpheus mosaic in the Roman Villa at Casale near Piazza Armerina, Sicily; second half of the fourth century (? see *ad* pl. XVIII, 1).

Standing phoenix with radiate head.

Photo: Giovanni Amalfi e Figlio, Piazza Armerina.

See the literature mentioned *ad* pl. XVIII, 1; Gentili, *La villa romana*, fig. 1. See above p. 244 (n. 6), 247 (n. 2).

Pl. XX, 1

Apsidal mosaic, S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome; date of the mosaic in this form *ca.* 1290, renewed in 1884.

Cross on the mountain of Paradise where the four rivers have their source; at either side a stag and three sheep. In the clouds

above the cross, a bust of Christ. Beside the cross: r.—John the Baptist, St. Anthony, and the apostles John and Andrew, l.—Mary, Pope Nicholas IV, Francis of Assisi, and the apostles Peter and Paul. Under this scene the river Jordan. Between the Paradise rivers the Heavenly Jerusalem in which the busts of St. Peter and St. Paul are visible; in front of the Celestial City (= Paradise, see p. 319) stands a cherub with six folded wings and a sword in his hands. From the centre of the city rises a large palm tree (the Tree of Life) on which the phoenix, standing to r. and bearing a multi-rayed nimbus. There is considerable controversy about the extent to which the mosaic made by Torriti (*ca.* 1290) resembled the mosaic dating from the time of Constantine the Great. The representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem between the rivers of Paradise can certainly be considered Early Christian. Lactantius too placed the phoenix in Paradise (see p. 319ff.); the radiate nimbus of the phoenix does not occur in the Middle Ages (see p. 251, n. 2) but was common in Early Christian art.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

G. B. de Rossi, *Mosaici cristiani delle chiese di Roma, anteriori al secolo XV*, Rome, 1899, fasc. XXVI, pl. 37; Wilpert, *MM*, I, 189-201; *idem*, *La decorazione constantiniana della Basilica Lateranense*, in *Rivista d'Archeologia Cristiana*, 6, 1929, 53-126; G. J. Hoogewerff, *Il mosaico absidale di San Giovanni in Laterano ed altri mosaici romani*, in *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 27, 1952-1954, 297-326; W. Oakeshott, *The mosaics of Rom, from the third to the fourteenth centuries*, London, 1967, fig. 67. See also above p. 183 and 326.

Pl. XX, 2

Detail of no. 1: The phoenix on its palm tree in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

Pl. XXI

Mosaic from the post-Theodorian Basilica of Aquileia, Museo Archeologico, Aquileia; second half of the fourth century A.D.

Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus, standing to r., in flames.

Photo: Museo Archeologico, Aquileia.

La Basilica di Aquileia, a cura del Comitato per le ceremonie celebrative del IX° centenario della Basilica e del 1° centenario dei militi ignoti, Bologna, 1933, pl. L; G. Brusin and P. L. Zovatto, *Monumenti paleocristiani di Aquileia e di Grado*, Udine, 1957, 160, fig. 66; G. Menis, *I mosaici cristiani di Aquileia*, Udine, 1965, 33-35, fig. 8 (*cf.* Leclercq, 688, fig. 10165). In Aquileia another, unfortunately very fragmentary, phoenix was found during the excavations of 1930. This bird too has a radiate nimbus and is standing on an unidentifiable object, *cf.* G. Brusin, *Aquileia, scoperta di mosaici pavimentali romani e cristiani*, in *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, Ser. 6, *Notizie degli scavi di Antichità*, VII, 1931, 126, 127, fig. 2. See above p. 231.

Pl. XXII

Fragment of Early Christian sarcophagus, Museo Pio Cristiano, Città del Vaticano; last quarter of the fourth century A.D.

Adoratio crucis. Phoenix standing, front, on T-cross.

Photo: Archivio fotografico dei Gallerie e Musei Vaticani.

Wilpert, *SC*, I, *Tav.* XVIII, 3, *Testo*, 19, 326; G. Bovini and H. Brandenburg, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophagen*, I, Wiesbaden, 1967, 59, no. 62, pl. 20; C. M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, 3rd ed., Paderborn, 1922, 286-288, § 114. A similar representation of the phoenix was found on a now destroyed sarcophagus in Poitiers, *cf.* Wilpert, *SC*, I, *Tav.* CXLVIII, 1, *Testo*, 117, and *idem*, *Le due più antichi rappresentazioni della "adoratio crucis"*, in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, Ser. III. *Memorie*, 2, 1928, 135-155, pl. XII and XIII.

Pl. XXIII

Dome mosaic in Chapel of S. Giovanni in Fonte, Naples; *ca.* A.D. 400.

Phoenix, standing l., probably on rock.

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome.

Wilpert, *MM*, I, 233ff, III, pl. 29. J.-L. Maier, *Le Baptistère de Naples et ses mosaïques. Étude historique et iconographique*, (Paradosis, XIX), Fribourg (Switzerland), 1964, *passim*; date: 69-77. See above p. 180, 250 (n. 2), 251 (n. 1), 259 (n. 2).

Plates XXIV-XXIX, 1 and XXIX, 2-XXX, 2: Prefatory remarks

Plates XXIV-XXIX, 1 all concern the so-called *Traditio legis*. The origin and meaning of this scene are still controversial. A good review of the divergent views is given by M. Sotomayor, *S. Pedro en la iconografia paleocristiana*, (Bibl. Teol. Granadina, 5), Granada, 1962, 130-133, who has also provided a catalogue of all the *Traditio legis* occurrences in Early Christian art (126-130); see also W. N. Schumacher, *Dominus legem dat*, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, 54, 1959, 1-39; C. Davis-Weyer, *Das Traditio-Legis-Bild und seine Nachfolge*, in *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 12, 1961, 7-45, and Th. Klauser, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage in Bild und Wort*, (Drittes Beiheft zur Halbjahresschrift *Antike Kunst*), Olten, 1966, 74-76. Sotomayor's study makes it likely that this motif not only first occurred on the "Passion sarcophagi" but also originated there. It may now be taken as certain that the content of this scene is not the transmission of the law to St. Peter as head of the Church but rather the notion that Christ is triumphant over death, the Heavenly King, the Lawgiver. The scroll in Christ's hand often carries the words *Dominus legem dat,* which means "The Lord is (as Pantocrator) the lawgiver" and not "The Lord gives the law" (i.e. to St. Peter). The scene expresses the *Maiestas Domini* (*cf.* F. van der Meer, *Maiestas Domini. Théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien* (Studi di Antichità Cristiana, XIII), Città del Vaticano, 1938, 44, 180-184). Thus, it is not an earthly but rather a heavenly scene. Christ is the Glorified Lord, standing on the mountain of Paradise or in the gateway to the Heavenly City (for the identity of both places, see p. 318-319 and pl. XX, 1). St. Peter and St. Paul are present as the most important witnesses of the Risen Lord. The phoenix in the left palm tree beside St. Paul is not primarily a reference to the proclamation of the resurrection by the great apostle of the Gentiles (see e.g. as early an author as G. Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, VI, Prato, 1880, 142, and also Sotomayor, 143-144), although the phoenix of course always implies the resurrection motif, but in this case first of all represents a symbol of the glorious life in the Heavenly Paradise (see above, Chapter VIII).

Plates XXIX, 2-XXX, 2 show a scene which developed from the so-called *Traditio legis* and is closely related to it (*cf.* for instance Davis-Weyer, *op. cit.*, 17 ff. and van der Meer, *op. cit.*, 184-185). This composition is found in the apse of several churches in Rome: the Saints to whom the church is dedicated being led before Christ in all His glory by St. Peter and St. Paul together with the founder of the church and several other Saints. This motif is sometimes called the *Adventus in Gloria*, but its meaning is more complex. On the one hand the scene is set in Paradise, as shown by the two palm trees with the phoenix on the one on the left: here, the Saints are being led forward to be presented to Christ. On the other hand, it is at the same time an eschatological scene in the strict sense: Christ appearing on the clouds of heaven for the Last Judgement. In its totality the composition conveys the notion that the saints can submit without fear to Christ's judgement and enter into Paradise, but it also evokes the message of *Rev.* i.7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds! Every eye shall see Him, and among them those who pierced Him".

Pl. XXIV

Early Christian sarcophagus from the Vatican cemetery; S. Pietro in Vaticano, Rome; end of the fourth century A.D.

Traditio legis. Phoenix in l. palm tree.

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome.

Wilpert, *SC*, I, *Tav.*, CLIV, 4, *Testo*, 183-184; Bovini and Brandenburg, *Repertorium*, I, 272-273, no. 675, pl. 103; R. Sansoni, *I sarcofagi paleocristiani a porte di città.* (Studi di Antichità Cristiane, 4), Bologna, 1969, 40-44 (with full bibliography). For similar sarcophagi with almost completely destroyed phoenixes, see Bovini and Brandenburg, *Repertorium*, I, 24-26, no. 28, pl. 9, and 123-124, no. 200, pl. 47. See above p. 55, 183, 326.

Pl. XXV, 1

Early Christian sarcophagus, Musée lapidaire d'art chrétien, Arles; *ca.* A.D. 400.

Traditio legis. Phoenix on l. palm tree.

Photo: Musée lapidaire d'art chrétien, Arles.

E. le Blant, *Étude sur les sarcophages chrétiens antiques de la Ville d'Arles*, Paris, 1878, 17, pl. IX; Wilpert, *SC*, I, *Tav.*, XII, 4, *Testo*, 180-181; A. Saggiorato, *I sarcofagi paleocristiani con scene di passione*, (Studi di Antichità Cristiane, 1), Bologna, 1968, 78-80, fig. 31 (with full bibliography); Th. Klauser, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage in Bild und Wort*, (Drittes Beiheft zur Halbjahresschrift *Antike Kunst*), Olten, 1966, 72-77, pl. 23. See above p. 55, 183, 326.

Pl. XXV, 2

Early Christian sarcophagus, S. Giovanni in Valle, Verona; *ca.* 400 A.D.

Traditio legis. Phoenix on l. palm tree.

Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Wilpert, *SC*, I, *Tav.* CL, 2, *Testo*, 177; Klauser, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage*, 77-78, pl. 25. See above p. 55, 183, 326.

Pl. XXVI, 1

Detail of pl. XXV, 1: *Traditio legis*.

Photo: Musée lapidaire d'art chrétien, Arles.

Pl. XXVI, 2

Detail of pl. XXV, 2: *Traditio legis*. See also above p. 234.

Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Pl. XXVII

Fresco. Catacomb *ad Decimum*, Grottaferrata; beginning of the fifth century A.D.

Traditio legis. Phoenix with ten-rayed nimbus, on l. palm tree.

Photo: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome.

Wilpert, *MM*, I, 269-270, pl. 132. See above p. 55, 183, 326.

Pl. XXVIII

Graffito from the Roman catacomb of Priscilla, Anagni, Palazzo di Bonifacio VIII; *ca.* A.D. 400.

Traditio legis. Small phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus on second r. branch of l. palm tree.

Photo: U. Frattali, Anagni.

R. Garrucci, *Storia dell'arte cristiana*, VI, Prato, 1880, 142, pl. 484, 14; Wilpert, *MM*, I, 104, fig. 31; F. van der Meer, *Maiestas Domini. Théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien*, (Stud. di Ant. Crist., XIII), Città del Vaticano, 1938, 46-47. See above p. 55, 183, 326.

Pl. XXIX, 1

Gold-glass. Vatican Library, Museo Sacro, Rome; *ca.* A.D. 400.

Traditio legis. Phoenix with nimbus without rays in l. palm tree.

Photo: Vatican Library.

C. R. Morey, *The gold-glass collection of the Vatican Library, with additional catalogues of other gold-glass collections*, ed. by G. Ferrari, Città del Vaticano, 1959, 19, no. 78, pl. XIII. As late as the beginning of the eleventh century the *Traditio legis* is found in the apse of S. Silvestro in Tivoli (fresco, phoenix with eight rays in l. palm tree), *cf.* e.g. A. Rossi, *Tivoli*, (Collezione di monografie illustrate, Serie 1a—Italia Artistica, no. 43), Bergamo, 1909, 107-114. See above p. 55, 183, 250, 326.

Pl. XXIX, 2

Apsidal mosaic of SS. Cosma e Damiano, Rome; A.D. 526-530.

Adventus in Gloria. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus on l. palm tree.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

Wilpert, *MM*, II, 1070-1074, III, pl. 102; M. van Berchem and E. Clouzot, *Mosaïques chrétiennes du IVme au Xme siècle*, Geneva, 1924, 119-123, fig. 138; G. Matthiae, *SS. Cosma e Damiano e S. Teodoro*, Rome, 1948, 19-26; Oakeshott, *Mosaics*, 90-92, pl. XI; R. Budriesi, *La basilica dei SS. Cosma e Damiano a Roma*, (Studi di Antichità Cristiane, 3) Bologna, 1968, 113-133. See above p. 55, 183, 247, 258, 259 (n. 1, 2), 326.

Pl. XXX, 1

Apsidal mosaic of S. Prassede, Rome; A.D. 817-824.

Adventus in Gloria. Phoenix with nine-rayed nimbus on l. palm tree.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

Van Berchem and Clouzot, *Mosaïques*, 227-230, fig. 290; B. M. Apollonj Ghetti, *Santa Prassede*, Rome, 1961, 62, fig. 25; Oakeshott, *Mosaics*, 206, fig. 124. See above p. 55, 183, 259 (n. 1), 326.

Pl. XXX, 2

Apsidal mosaic of S. Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome; A.D. 817-824.

Adventus in Gloria. Phoenix with seven-rayed nimbus on l. palm tree.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

Van Berchem and Clouzot, *Mosaïques*, 245-249, fig. 311; Oakeshott, *Mosaics*, 212-213, fig. 129. A similar scene is found in the apse of S. Sebastiano al Palatino (or S. Maria in Pallara), Rome; late tenth century: fresco, phoenix with long tail and nimbus, within which six or seven rays, on l. palm tree; *cf.* Wilpert, *MM*, II, 1075-1081, IV, pl. 224. See above p. 55, 183, 326.

Pl. XXXI

Mosaic pavement from Daphne near Antioch on the Orontes; Musée du Louvre, Paris; sixth century A.D.

Phoenix with nimbus and five rays emanating from its head, standing r. on pyramid-shaped pyle of rocks; flower repeat in background. In border, pairs of ram's heads affronted, above pair of spread wings.

Photo: M. Chuzeville, Vanves (France).

Antioch on-the-Orontes, II. The excavations of 1933-1936, ed. by R. Stillwell, Princeton, 1938, 187 (detailed description), pl. 43; J. Lassus, *La mosaïque du phénix provenant des fouilles d'Antioche*, in *MMAI*, 36, 1938, 81-122, fig. 9; C. R. Morey, *The mosaics of Antioch*, London-New

York-Toronto, 1938, 43-44, pl. XXIV; D. Levi, *Antioch mosaic pavements*, Princeton-London-The Hague, 1947, I, 351-355, II, pls. 73, 134; G. Downey, *A history of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton, 1961, 391, n. 72; G. Ch. Picard, *L'art de Rome et des Provinces dans les collections parisiennes*, (catalogue), Paris, 1970, 91-92. See above p. 180, 257, 258, 259 (n. 2).

Pl. XXXII

Mosaic pavement in the Church of Umm Jerar (Horvat Gerarit) near Gaza; sixth century A.D.

Right border panel: phoenix with rayed nimbus, sitting on a chalice-shaped altar, the wood it has collected projecting upward on both sides.

Photo: Ministry of Education and Culture, Dept. of Antiquities and Museums, Jerusalem, Israel.

O. M. Dalton, in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 32, 1919, 47-54; *idem*, *The tessellated pavement of Umm Jerar*, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 34, 1919, 3-10, pls. on p. 6 and 7; *idem*, *East Christian art*, Oxford, 1925, p. 296; M. Avi-Yonah, *Mosaic pavements in Palestine*, in *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, 3, 1934, 33-34, no. 250; A. D. Trendall, *The Shellal mosaic and other Classical antiquities in the Australian War Memorial Canberra*, 3rd ed., Canberra, 1964, 24. In a letter of April 28, 1970 Professor Avi-Yonah wrote me that "the mosaic at Umm Jerar (now named Horvat Gerarit) has been left covered up since 1921. The last report of a visit dates from November 1941; later information refers only to a danger of erosion". The photo published here dates from 1921. See also above p. 231-232.

Pl. XXXIII

Mosaic pavement from the Basilica of Justinian, Sabratha, Museum of Sabratha; sixth century A.D.

Phoenix with rayed nimbus, standing to front, within the lowest of four "mandorlas" formed by two intertwining vine-stems leading down the axis of the nave.

Photo: Archeologisch Instituut, Utrecht.

R. Bartoccini, *Guida di Sabratha*, Rome, 1927, 63, fig. 26; H. Pierce and R. Tyler, *L'Art Byzantin*, II, Paris, 1934, pl. 115; S. Aurigemma, *Italy in Africa. Archaeological discoveries (1911-1943). Tripolitania*, I, 1, Rome, 1960, 27-28, pls. 19 and 20 (with other literature); D. E. L. Haynes, *An archaeological and historical guide to the pre-Islamic antiquities of Tripolitania*, Tripolis, 1965, 120-121, pl. 21.

Pl. XXXIV, 1

Apsidal mosaic of S. Agnese fuori le Mura, Rome; between A.D. 625 and 640.

Phoenix, blue in a roundel of gold, standing r., decorating the lower part of the Saint's robe.

Photo: E. Richter, Rome.

Van Berchem and Clouzot, *Mosaïques*, 195-198, fig. 247; Oakeshott, *Mosaics*, 148, pl. XVI. See above p. 388.

Pl. XXXIV, 2

Mosaic of the triumphal arch in S. Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna; *ca.* A.D. 549.

Archangel Michael; on his purple chlamys, red-bordered golden roundels with palms and birds of the same type as the phoenix on the garment of S. Agnese (see no. 1). Gabriel, on the other side of the triumphal arch, has a similar chlamys with birds.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

J. Kurth, *Die Mosaiken der christlichen Ära*, I: *Die Wandmosaiken von Ravenna*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1902, 214-215; E. Dinkler, *Das Apsismosaik von S.Apollinare in Classe*, (Wissensch. Abh. der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 29), Köln-Opladen, 1964, 21, pl. XIV (Michael), pl. XV (Gabriel); G. Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics*, Greenwich, Conn., (1956), pl. 46 (Michael); F. van der Meer and Chr. Mohrmann, *Atlas van de oudchristelijke wereld*, Amsterdam-Brussels, 1958, fig. 268 (Gabriel). In the well-known mosaic of Justinian in S. Vitale, Ravenna, the emperor wears a garment showing the same golden roundels with birds, *cf.* Kurth, 122, and Bovini, pl. 30. See above p. 388.

Pl. XXXV

Mural painting in the Chapel of St. Felicitas (now destroyed), Rome, date uncertain: fifth to seventh century A.D.

The martyr St. Felicitas with her seven sons, all martyrs too, between two palm trees in the heavenly Paradise. Phoenix with ten-rayed closed nimbus on r. palm tree. Above, Christ with crown of Victory.

Photo: reproduced from De Rossi (drawing by Ruspi).

H. Leclercq, *Félicité (Passion et cimétière de)*, in *DACL*, V, 1, 1922, 1280-1289, figs. 4327, 4328; drawing by Piale reproduced in Türk, 3467, fig. 9; drawing by Ruspi in G. B. de Rossi, *Scoperta d'una cripta storica nel Cimeterio di Massimo "ad Sanctam Felicitatem" sulla Via Salaria Nuova*, in *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, Ser. IV, 3, 1884-1885, 149-184, pl. XI-XII. For other reproductions of this fresco, see Leclercq, *o.c.*, 1281. See above p. 55, 183, 251, 326.

Pl. XXXVI, 1

Lead seal of Siricius; present location unknown, sixth century A.D.?

Obv.: Monogram of Siricius (SIRICI).
Rev.: Phoenix standing r. on branch, many rays around head.

Photo: reproduced from De Ficoroni.

F. de Ficoroni, *I piombi antichi*, Rome, 1740, 23, pl. V, 13. See above p. 250.

Pl. XXXVI, 2

Lead seal of Siricius; present location unknown, sixth century A.D.?

Obv.: ...DISNI DIACON... (= ...indigni diaconi...), monogram of Siricius (SIRICI).
Rev.: FE... (= Fenix), above F a cross. Phoenix, standing l., nimbus within which seven or eight rays.

Photo: reproduced from De Ficoroni.

De Ficoroni, *Piombi*, 34, pl. IX, 9, (*cf.* Leclercq, 689, fig. 10167). See above p. 251.

Pl. XXXVI, 3

Graffito, above the entrance to S. Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome; destroyed by fire in 1823. Date unknown.

Dove-like bird with a twig in its beak; above: FENIX.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

G. B. de Rossi, *La Roma sotterranea cristiana*, II, Rome, 1867, 314, fig. 2; also Leclercq, 690, fig. 10168. See above p. 250.

Pl. XXXVI, 4

Lead medallion, Vatican Library, Museo Sacro; fifth or sixth century A.D.

Obv.: Christ between two palms, phoenix (?) in r. palm, no nimbus. *Rev.:* Cross.

Photo: reproduced from De Rossi.

G. B. de Rossi, *Roma e Modena — Medaglie di devozione*, in *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, Ser. II, 2, 1871, 150-151, pl. IX, 2. See above p. 55, 183, 250.

Pl. XXXVI, 5

Stone stamp, Treasure of St. Columban, Bobbio. Date unknown.

Phoenix standing r., seven rays around head, wings spread, long legs. Circumscription illegible.

Photo: Index of Christian Art.

C. Celi, *Cimeli Bobbiesi*, 2nd ed., Rome, 1923, 58, fig. 20 c (unaccessible). See above p. 250.

Pl. XXXVII

Illustration in the Smyrna *Physiologus*, fol. 32vo. (destroyed by fire in 1922); *ca.* 1100.

Nimbed priest of Heliopolis greeting arriving phoenix (without nimbus); the bird is also shown sitting to r. in flames on the large column in the foreground. Behind priest, also on columns, two statues of soldiers bearing sword, shield, and lance. Above, red solar disk with eight triple rays; within disk woman with raised r. hand and globe in l.

Photo: reproduced from Strzygowski.

J. Strzygowski, *Der Bilderkreis des griechischen Physiologus, des Kosmas Indikopleustes und Oktateuch*, (Byzantin. Archiv, 2) Leipzig, 1899, 19-20, pl. IV. See above p. 232 (n. 1).

Pl. XXXVIII, 1

Sarcophagus of St. Maximus, Crypt of S. Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome; date uncertain, see below.

Phoenix with spread wings in burning nest which rests on column. The bird resembles most the eagle, as in the Vatican sculpture (no. 2) and in medieval representations of the phoenix. The sarcophagus is Classical in origin; the phoenix was added at a later date, probably in the beginning of the ninth century, when the remains of St. Cecilia and the other martyrs Valerianus, Tiburtius, and Maximus, were brought from the catacomb of Praetextatus to the crypt of S. Cecilia in Trastevere. According to the apocryphal *Acts of St. Cecilia* (after A.D. 486; ed. Boninus Mombritius, *Sanctuarium*, nova editio I, Paris, 1910, 339) the addition of the phoenix was due to Cecilia herself: *Quem* (sc. Maximum) *sancta Caecilia iuxta ubi Tyburtium et Valerianum sepelierat in novo sarcophago sepelivit. Et iussit ut in illius sculperetur phoenix ad indicium fidei eius qui se resurrectionem inventurum phoenicis exemplo suscepit.*

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

G. B. Giovenale, *Ricerche architettoniche della Basilica,* in *Cosmos Catholicus. Il mondo cattolico illustrato,* 4, 1902, 648-669; Wilpert, *SC,* II, *Testo,* 271, fig. 168; H. Leclercq, *Cécile (Crypte et Basilique de Sainte-),* in *DACL,* II, 2, 1910, 2773.

Pl. XXXVIII, 2

Sculpture in the Vatican Museums; date unknown (Classical? Medieval?).

Burning phoenix on nest.

Photo: The Vatican Museums.

W. Amelung, *Die Skulpturen des Vaticanischen Museums,* I, 4, Berlin, 1903, 617, no. 466, pl. 65. See above p. 232.

Pl. XXXIX

Detail of the mosaic of the triumphal arch in S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome; twelfth century.

The prophet Isaiah with on scroll the text of *Isa.* vii.14; phoenix without nimbus on branch of palm tree as a symbol of the virgin birth of Christ, *cf.* Rufinus, *Expositio symboli*, 9.

Photo: Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht.

Oakeshott, *Mosaics*, 255, fig. 171. See above p. 183 (n. 4).

Pl. XL

Ceiling painting from a burgomaster's residence in Arnhem, Municipal Museum, Arnhem; seventeenth century.

Young sun god standing in his chariot drawn by four horses, under which fire and clouds; in the fire a salamander. Burning phoenix on the outstreched l. hand of the sun god, above the horses a flying dragon with two legs and a fire-breathing crocodile head.

Photo: Municipal Museum, Arnhem.

See above p. 232 (n. 1), and 302.

APPENDIX: DUBIOUS PHOENIXES

I. Birds reported as Phoenix (photographs not obtainable)

1. According to O. Garana, *Le catacombe siciliane e i loro martiri*, Palermo, 1961, 292, the phoenix occurs in the catacombs of Sicily; see also l'Abbe Martigny, *Dictionnaire des antiquités chrétiennes*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1877, 641.
2. R. du Coudray la Blanchère and P. Gauckler, *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui*, Paris, 1897, 200, no. 570: lamp with phoenix.
3. P. Gauckler, *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui*, Suppl., I, Paris, 1907, 10, no. 206: mosaic from Bir Ftouha, medallion with phoenix. See also A. Merlin, *Inventaire des mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique*, II, Suppl. l. Paris, 1915, no. 206.
4. M. Besnier and P. Blanchet, *Collection Farges*, Paris, 1900, 76, no. 60: tessera with phoenix in circle.

II. Birds interpreted as Phoenix on insufficient Grounds

Gems

1. L. Perret, *Catacombes de Rome*, IV, Paris, 1851, pl. XVI, no. 68, published a gem with a bird on an olive branch. According to Martigny, *Dictionnaire des antiquités chrétiennes*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1877, 641, this bird represents the phoenix, but it has more resemblance to a peacock.
2. A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, Paris, 1964, 70, no. 86: a bird with a fish in its claws is considered by the authors to represent the phoenix. However, the bird on this amulet does not show the characteristic features of the phoenix, and, furthermore, no indication of a special relationship between the phoenix and a fish is to be found in Classical or Early Christian literature or art.
3. According to D. Wortmann, *Kosmogonie und Nilflut. Studien zu*

einigen Typen magischer Gemmen griechisch-römischer Zeit aus Ägypten, in *BJ*, 166, 1966, 103, the phoenix is shown on a gem in the *Metropolitankapitel* of the Dome of Cologne, Inv. N. 22, but a phoenix cannot be distinguished on this gem.

4. F. Imhoof-Blumer and O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums*, Leipzig, 1889, 157, pl. XXVI, 21 published a gem with an eagle-like phoenix on its burning nest; this gem is not a Classical but a modern specimen, see p. 232, n. 1.

Epitaphs

5. J. B. de Rossi, *Inscriptiones christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores*, I, Rome, 1857-1861, 155, no. 354, shows a sepulchral inscription with a nimbed bird generally held to be the phoenix (*cf*. Leclercq, 691, fig. 10170); but see O. Marucchi, *I monumenti del Museo Cristiano Pio-Lateranense*, Milan, 1910, pl. 82, 4: probably, the "nimbus" is only the prolonged stem of an olive-leaf.

3. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones*, II, 1, Rome, 1888, 444, no. 185: sepulchral inscription for Anastasia and Laurentia with two birds, for unknown reasons assumed to be phoenixes.

7. E. Le Blant, *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIIIe siecle*, II, Paris, 1865, 43-44, no. 398, pl. 49, no. 287, *cf*. also E. Diehl, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, II, Berlin, 1927, 214, no. 3474, and Leclercq, 687, fig. 10164: sepulchral inscription for Eufrasius with below two birds supposed by Le Blant to represent phoenixes and not peacocks, because they do not have the latter's long tail. This may be the case, but it is impossible to identify the birds with certainty.

8. R. Kanzler, *Relazione ufficiale degli scavi eseguiti dalla Commissione di Archeologia Sacra nelle catacombe (1907-1909)*, in *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 15, 1909, 129, no. 35 (from Gallery G in Catacomb of Praetextatus, reproduced by Leclercq, 690, fig. 10169): sepulchral inscription for Constantia with, at the side, a heron-like bird with two projecting feathers at the back of its head, according to Kanzler representing the phoenix. One could think of a representation of the phoenix in the form

of the Egyptian *benu*, which would be very exceptional, but more probably a real heron was meant.

Sculptures

9. A. F. F. Mariette, *Le Sérapéum de Memphis*, ed. by G. Maspero, Paris, 1882, 28, wrongly identified a now lost bird with a woman's head at Memphis as the phoenix, but this unquestionably was a Siren, *cf*. J. Ph. Lauer and Ch. Picard, *Les statues ptolémaïques du Serapieion de Memphis*, (Publ. de l'Inst. d'Art et d'Archéologie de l'Univ. de Paris, 3), Paris, 1955, 14, 16, no. 13; 17, 186, 222, 223; pl. 21.
10. M. Michaelis, "*Pharmakon athanasias*". *Ein neuer Beitrag zur spätantik-frühchristlichen Kultsymbolik*, in *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, Nachrichtenblatt der deutschen Wissenschaft und Technik, 31, 1957, 346-350, figs. 1-3, published two stones from the Basilica in Ossenowo (fifth or sixth century A.D.), now in the Archaeological Museum at Varna (Bulgaria), each showing a peacock standing before a chalice. The author was of the opinion that probably peacocks were meant, but he also thought of the phoenix. There is no reason to doubt the identity of the peacock, as can be seen from the birds' typical tails.

Mosaics

11. F. Benoit, *Le symbolisme dans les sanctuaires de la Gaule*, Brussels, 1970, 22, sees the phoenix in a mosaic pavement (second half first century A.D.) at Ventimiglia, excavated in 1958 and described by N. Lamboglia, *Un mosaico romano e una stratigrafia preromana a Ventimiglia*, in *Rivista Ingauna e Intemelia*, NS, 13, 1958, 58-62, figs. 3 and 4 (also issued separately (Bordighera, 1958) with a colour reproduction of the mosaic on the cover). Lamboglia himself rightly did not mention the phoenix: of the various birds in this mosaic only a peacock and a duck can be identified with certainty.
12. G. Becatti, *Scavi di Ostia*, IV, Roma, 1961, 55-56, 362, pl. CXCVIII, 73 (*cf.* also S. Laeuchli (ed.), *Mithraism in Ostia. Mystery religion and Christianity in the ancient port of Rome*, North Western University Press, 1967, pl. 30): a bird with the charac-

ter R next to it is thought to represent the phoenix, the R indicating *Resurrectio*. For this interpretation Becatti based himself on the much-discussed views of Margherita Guarducci, see e.g. her *La crittografia mistica e i graffiti vaticani (a proposito di una recensione del p. Antonio Ferrua)*, in *Archeologia Classica*, 13, 1961, 217-218. The bird shows nothing of the usual iconography of the phoenix and for this reason Becatti's interpretation may be doubted.

13. R. F. Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia*, London, 1963, 115, pls. III, 14b and 16a, for unknown reasons supposes the unidentifiable birds in the Dome mosaic of St. George's at Thessalonica to be phoenixes.

14. Lassus, *La mosaïque du phénix*, 110, n. 4, mentions a phoenix occurring in mosaic fragments from the Church of St. Hilary in Poitiers, now in the Municipal Museum, with reference to G. Lafaye and A. Blanchet, *Inventaire des mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique*, I, Paris, 1909, 127, no. 581, who wrote in their description: "*Deux mosaïques, avec oiseau et fleurons (phénix?)*". The supposed occurrence of the phoenix in these mosaics is probably due to a careless reading of the ultimate source, i.e. De Longuemar, *Essai historique sur l'Église collégiale de Saint-Hilaire-Le-Grand de Poitiers*, in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest*, 1856, 66-67, pl. II, figs, 1, 2, who mentioned a "*perdrix*", i.e. a partridge (p. 67). The mosaics are very fragmentary; a phoenix cannot be distinguished.

15. L. Brehier, *Les mosaïques mérovingiennes de Thiers*, in *Melanges littéraires publiés par la Faculté des Lettres de Clermont-Ferrand à l'occasion du Centenaire de sa création (1810-1910)*, Clermont-Ferrand, 1910, 75, fig. 11, supposed the unmistakable peacock in the mosaic of Thiers to be a phoenix because of its nimbus; see above, p. 250, n. 1.

Mural paintings

16. J. P. Peters and H. Thiersch, *Painted tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa (Marêshah)*, London, 1905, 88-90 and frontispiece, published a sepulchral painting with two spread-winged eagles above a garland separating them from two fire-spouting vessels,

one beneath each of the eagles. The authors thought it possible that not eagles but phoenixes were meant. The birds are, however, clearly eagles, and the separation by the garland implies that no connection is to be assumed between the birds above and the fires below; see also E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish symbols in the Greco-Roman period,* (Bollingen Series, XXXVII), New York, 1953, I, 69, III, fig. 12.

17. R. Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, VI, Prato, 1880, 175, pl. 495, 3, recognized the phoenix in the bird depicted in the Catacomb of Praetextatus (arcosolium near Cubiculum of Vibia); in front of the bird lies a rounded object which he identified as the egg of myrrh. From a comparison with Garrucci's pl. 495, 5, it may be assumed that the bird represents the peacock.

18. Leclercq, 690, thought it possible that the phoenix was shown on one of the four ornamental squares on the wall of a crypt in the cemetery of S. Nazaro at Milan, as published by Garrucci, *Storia*, II, pl. 105c. In these squares a cock, a peacock, and ducks can be discerned (as also according to Leclercq in *DACL*, II, 2, 1907, 3011, fig. 1043). There is no reason to suppose that one of these birds could be the phoenix.

19. A. Fakry, *The Necropolis of El-Bagawat in Kharga Oasis*, Cairo, 1951, 80, 85 (pl. VII), 91-92 (fig. 77), 95-99 (fig. 84), saw the great birds painted in chapels no. 25, no. 175, and no. 210 of El-Bagawat (after the fifth century A.D.) as phoenixes. More probably they represent eagles, *cf.* e.g. Maria Cramer, *Archäologische und epigraphische Klassifikation koptischer Denkmäler*, Wiesbaden, 1957, figs. 1, 5, 13, 14, 30.

Lamps

20. A. L. Delattre, *Lampes chrétiennes de Carthage*, in *Revue de l'art chrétien*, 4th Ser., 2, 1891, 48-49, nrs. 289-296; *ibid.*, 3, 1892, 228, no. 818 and *ibid.*, 4, 1893, 35, nrs. 868, 869: Lamps with birds held to be phoenixes (concerning Delattre's no. 290, see also his *Lampes chrétiennes de Carthage*, Lyons, 1880, 33-35). According to V. Schultze, *Archäologie der altchristlichen Kunst*, Munich, 1895, 295, the birds on Delattre's nrs. 289-293, 295, represent eagles. There is no reason to assume that phoenixes are meant.

Leads seals

21. P. Monceaux, *Enquête sur l'épigraphie chrétienne d'Afrique*, in *Revue Archéologique*, 4th Ser., II, 1903, 251, no. 103, and 253, no. 108, recognized the phoenix on two lead seals, published previously by M. Besnier and P. Blanchet, *Collection Farges*, Paris, 1900, 79, no. 98, pl. XI, 20, and no. 97, pl. XI, 11-12. These seals show a bird spreading its wings; there is no evidence to support Monceaux's assumption.

1

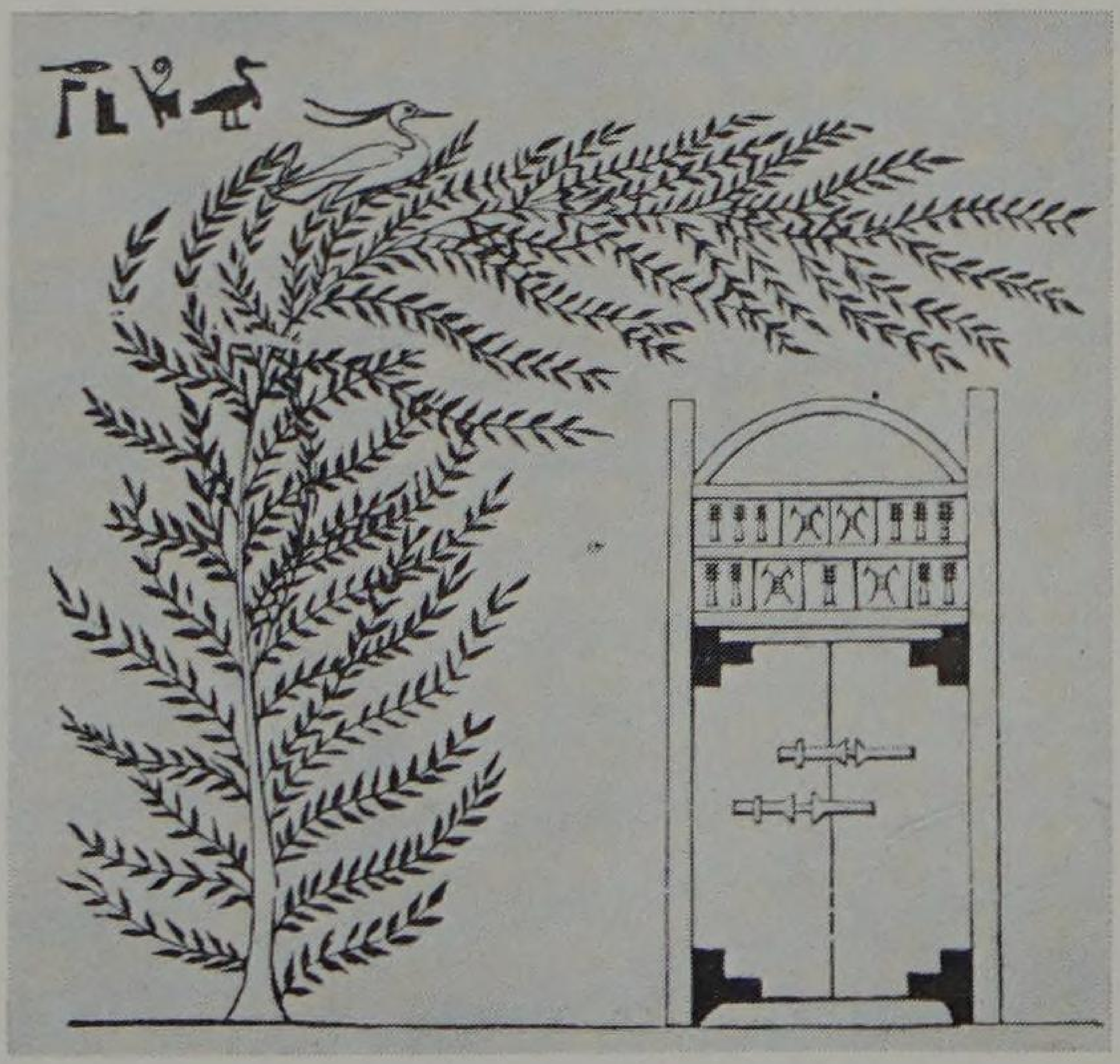

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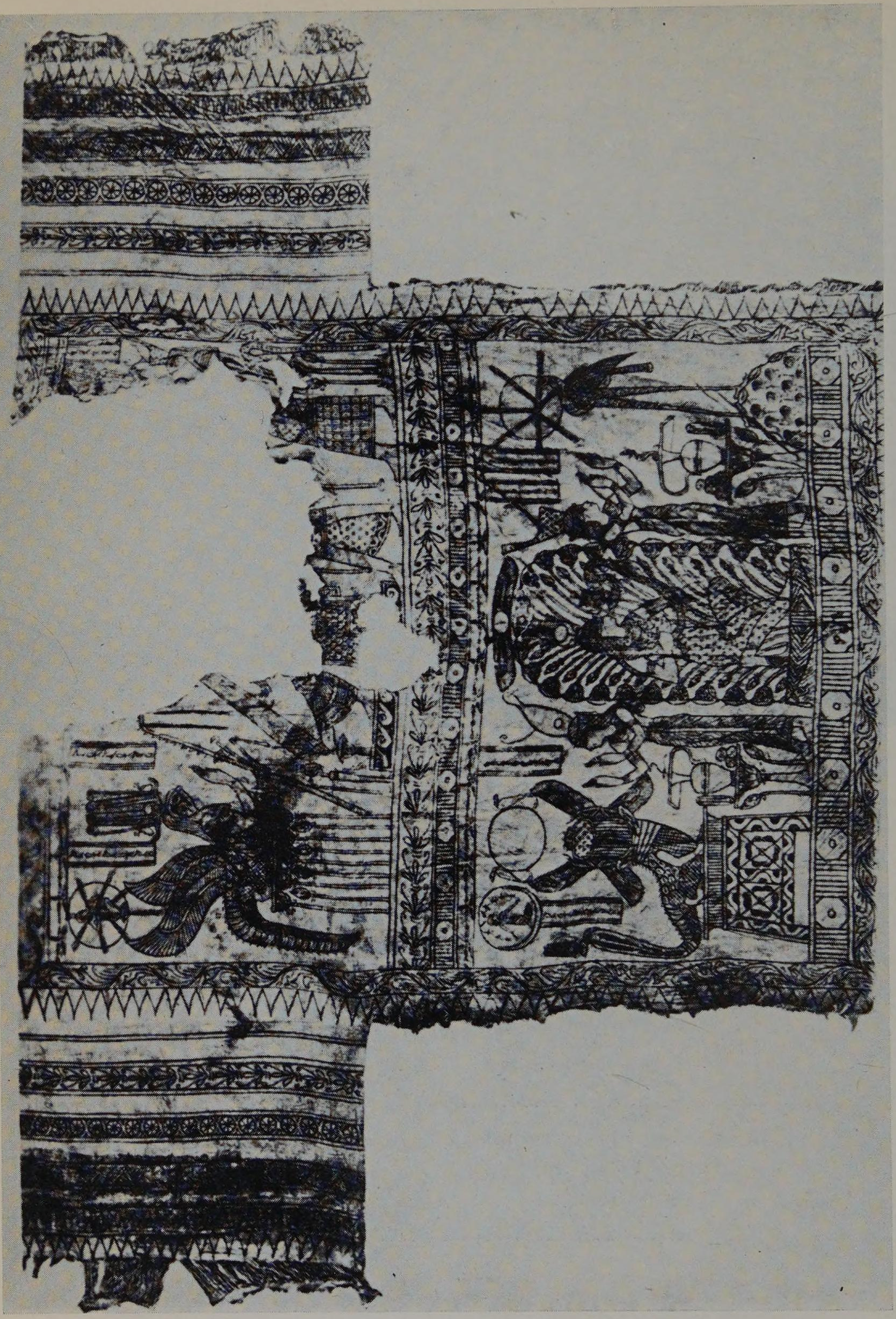
PLATE II



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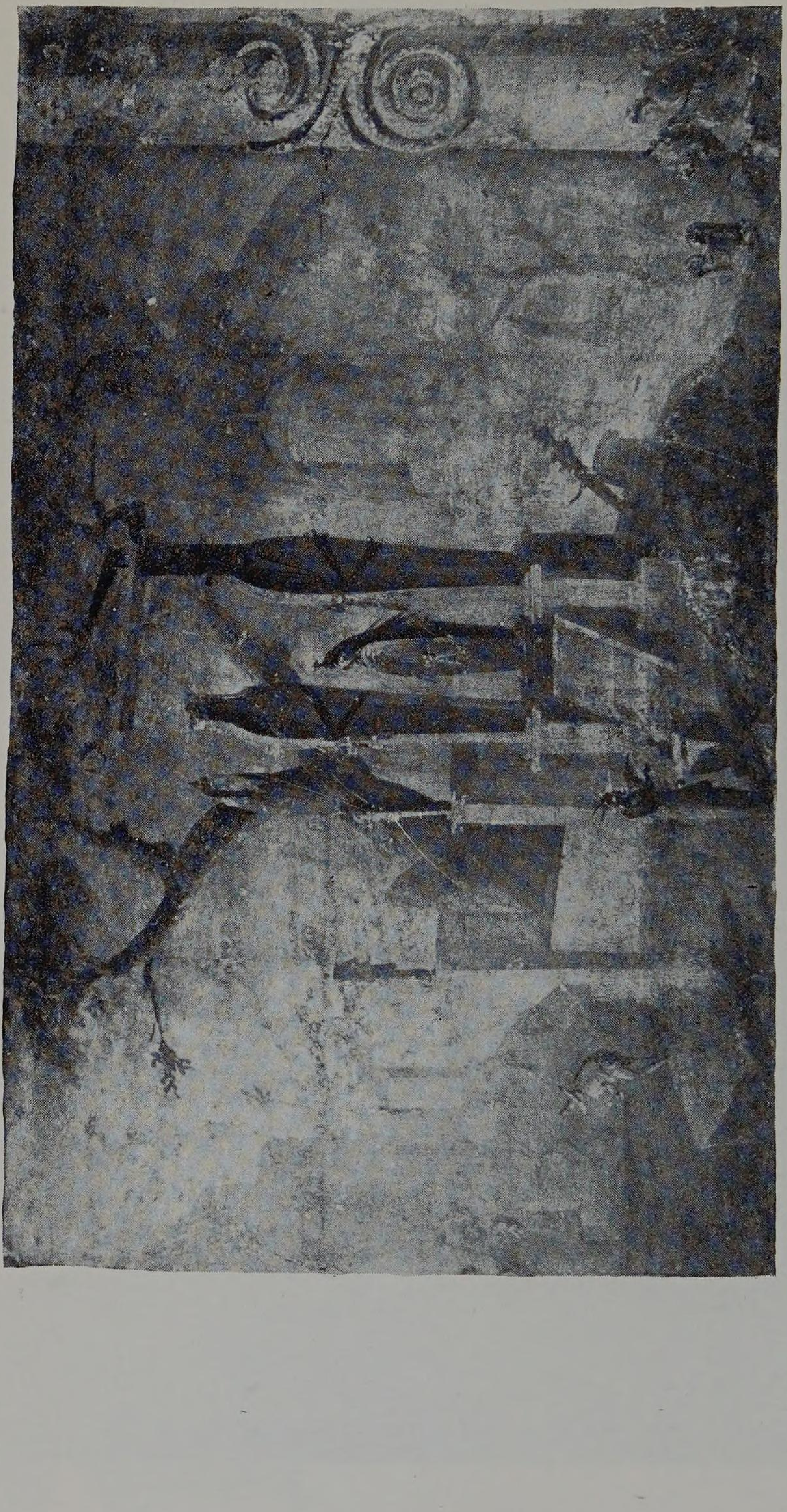

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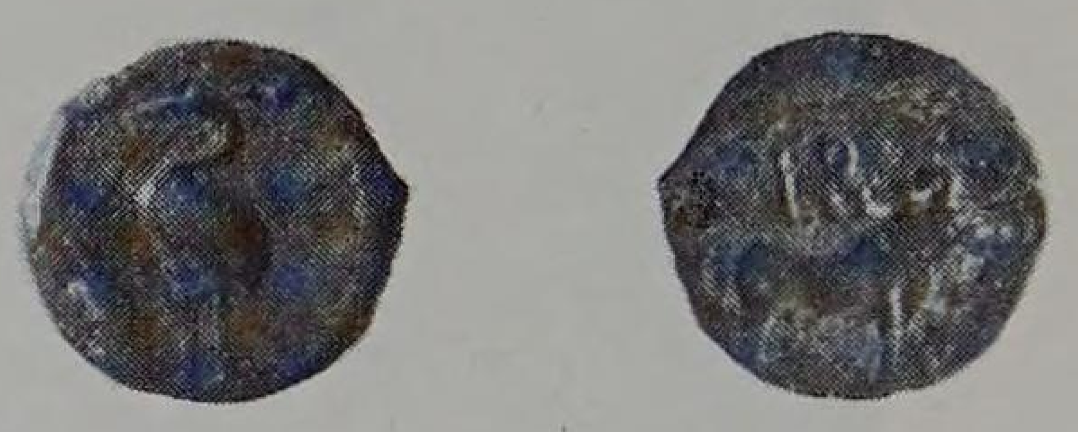

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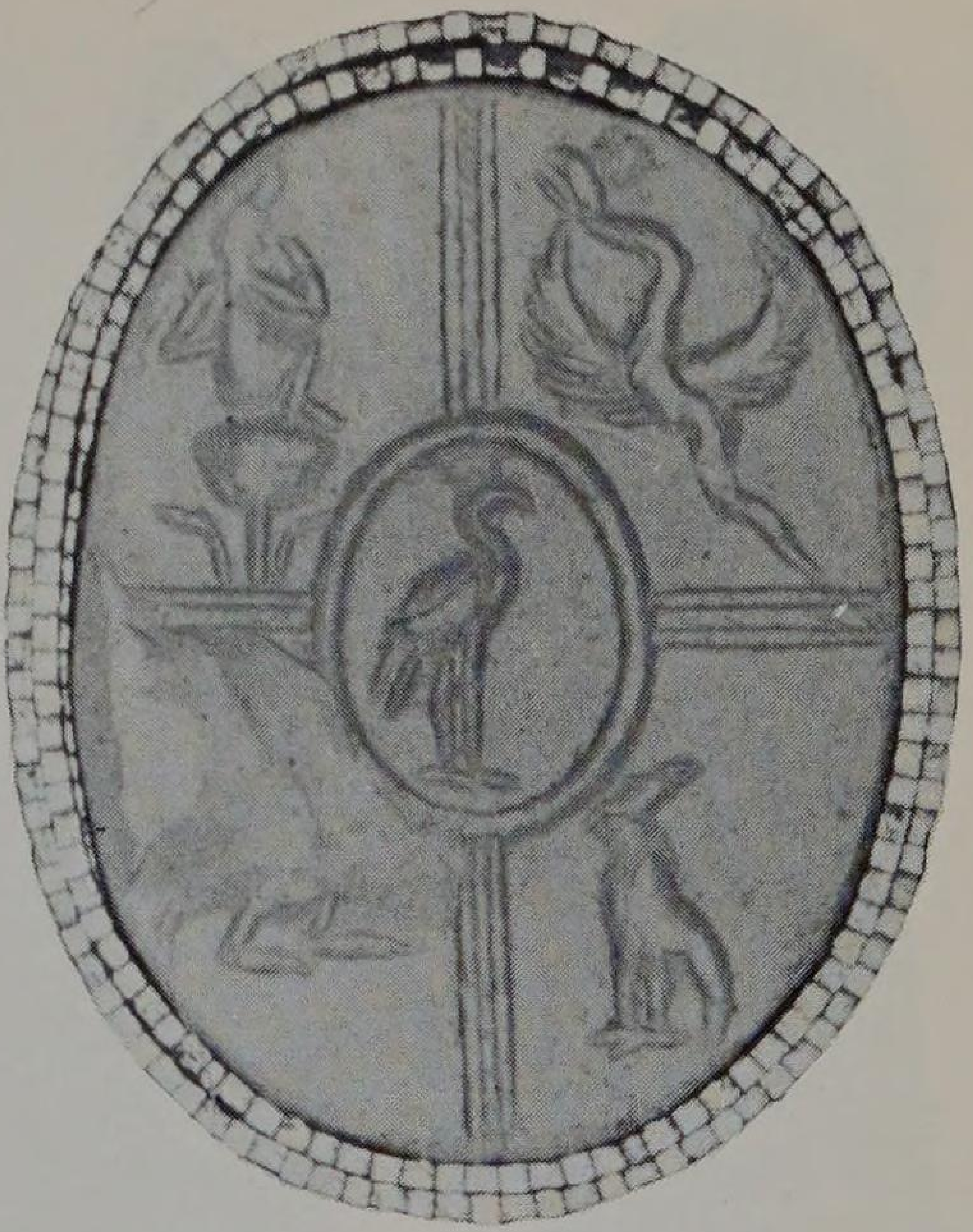

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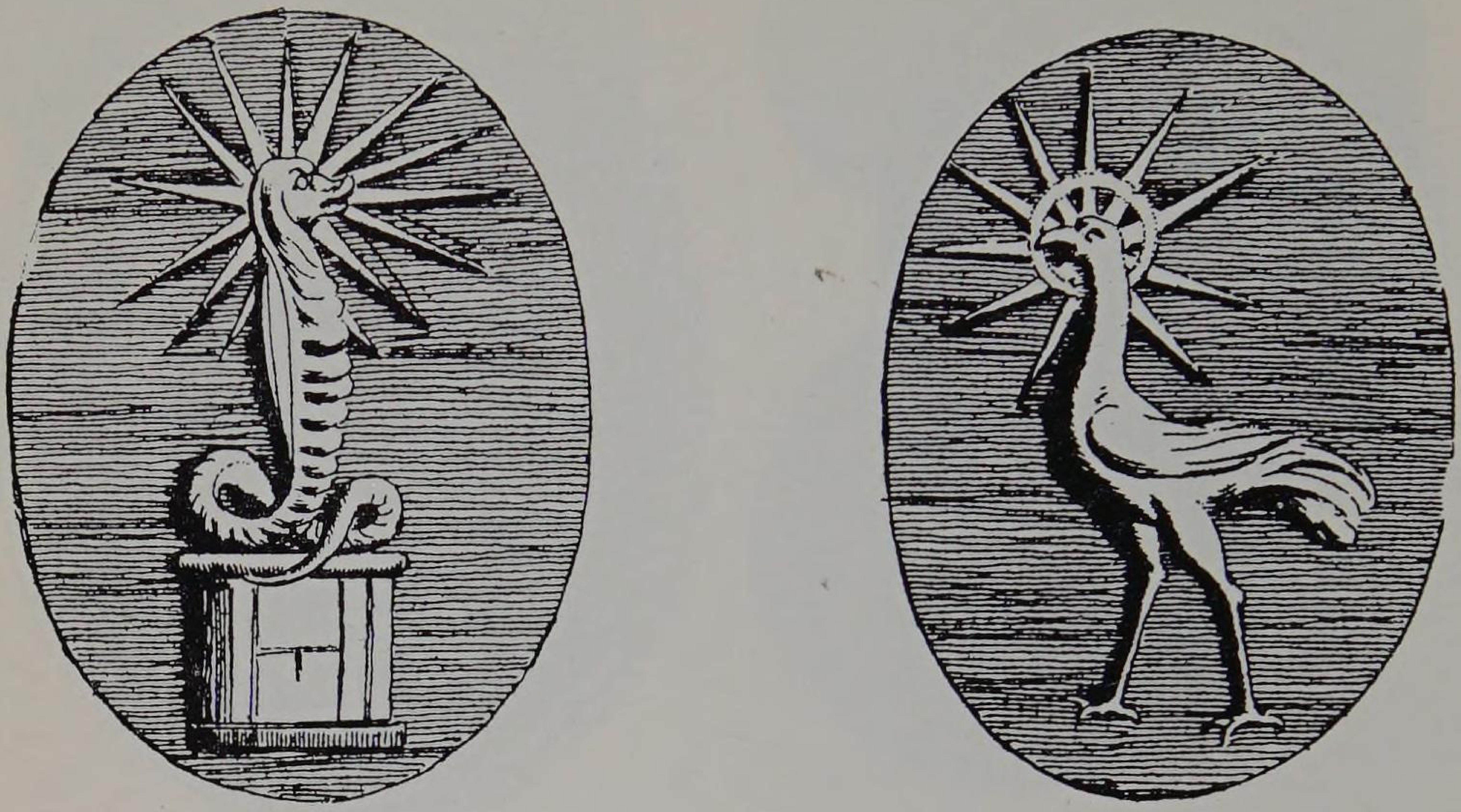

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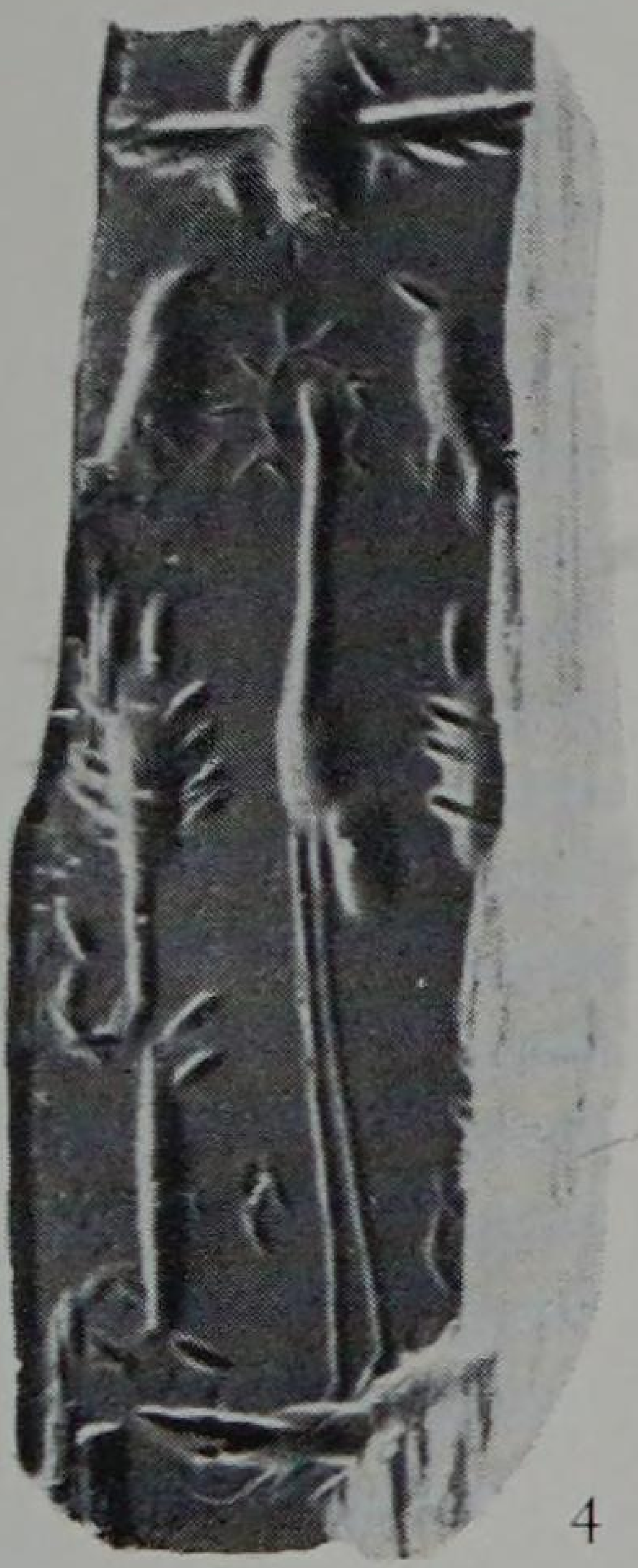
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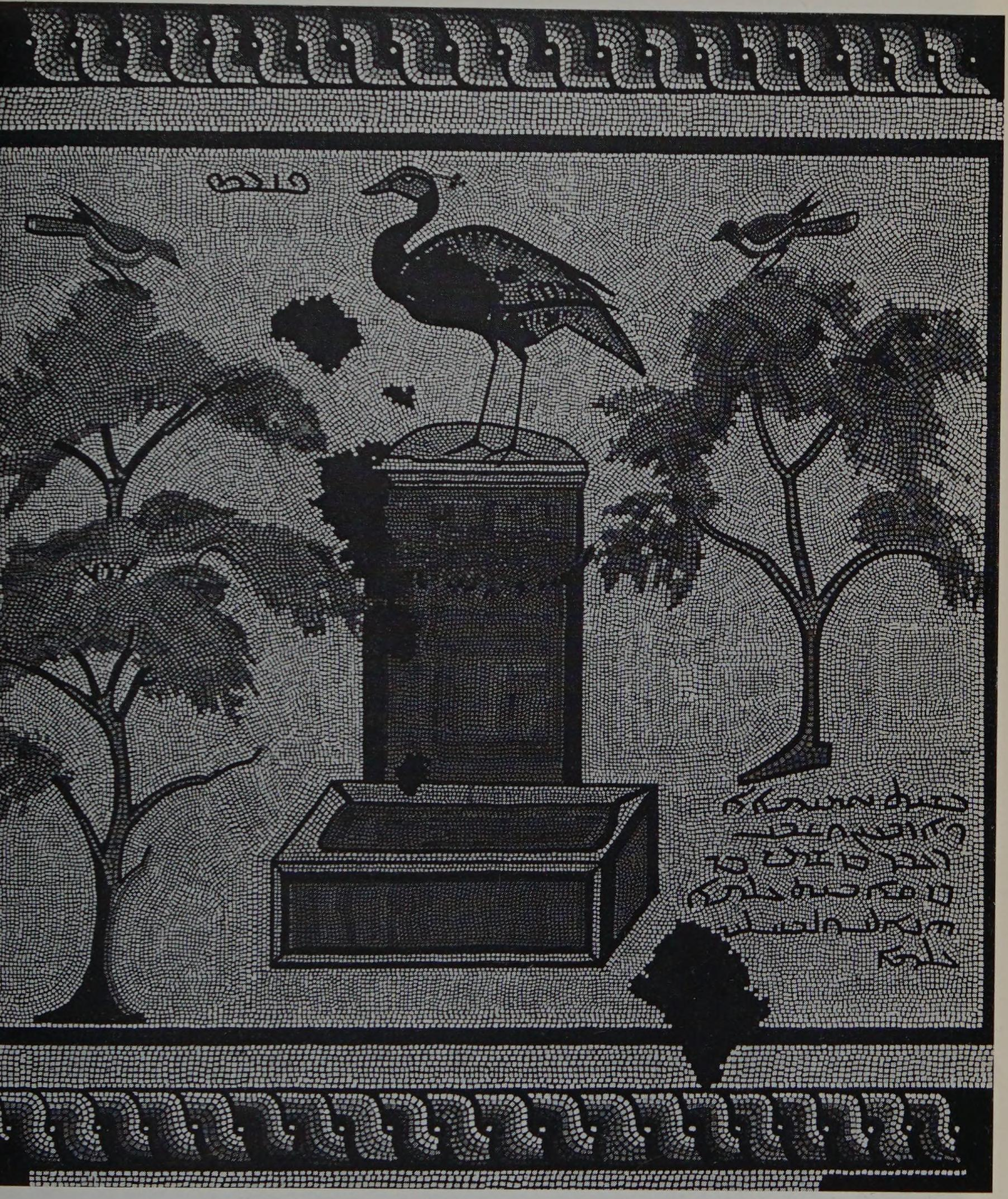
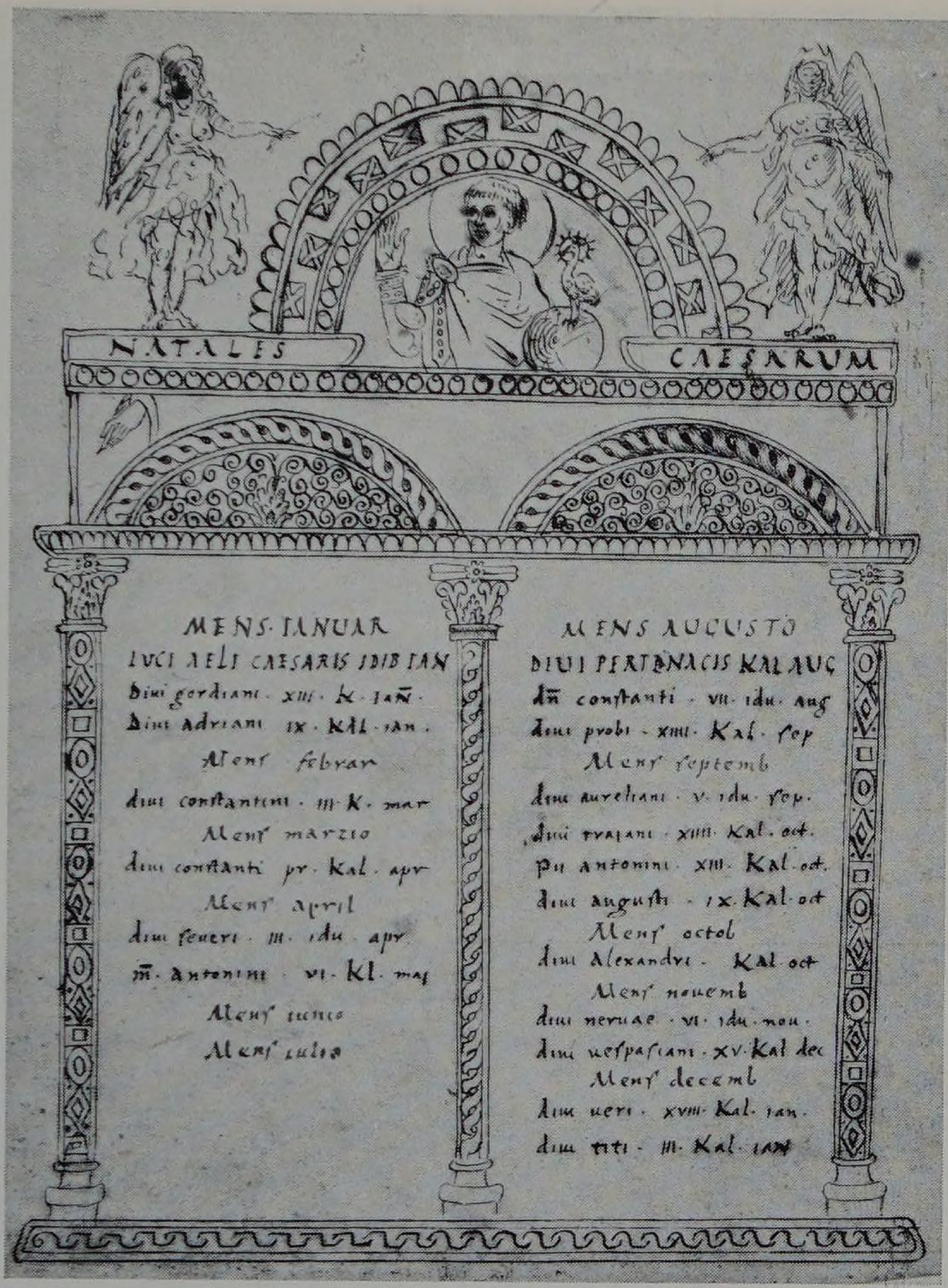


PLATE XIV

Plate XVI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m · antonini · VI · Kl · mai
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Mens iulio
MENS AUGUSTO
DIUI PERTINACIS KAL AUG
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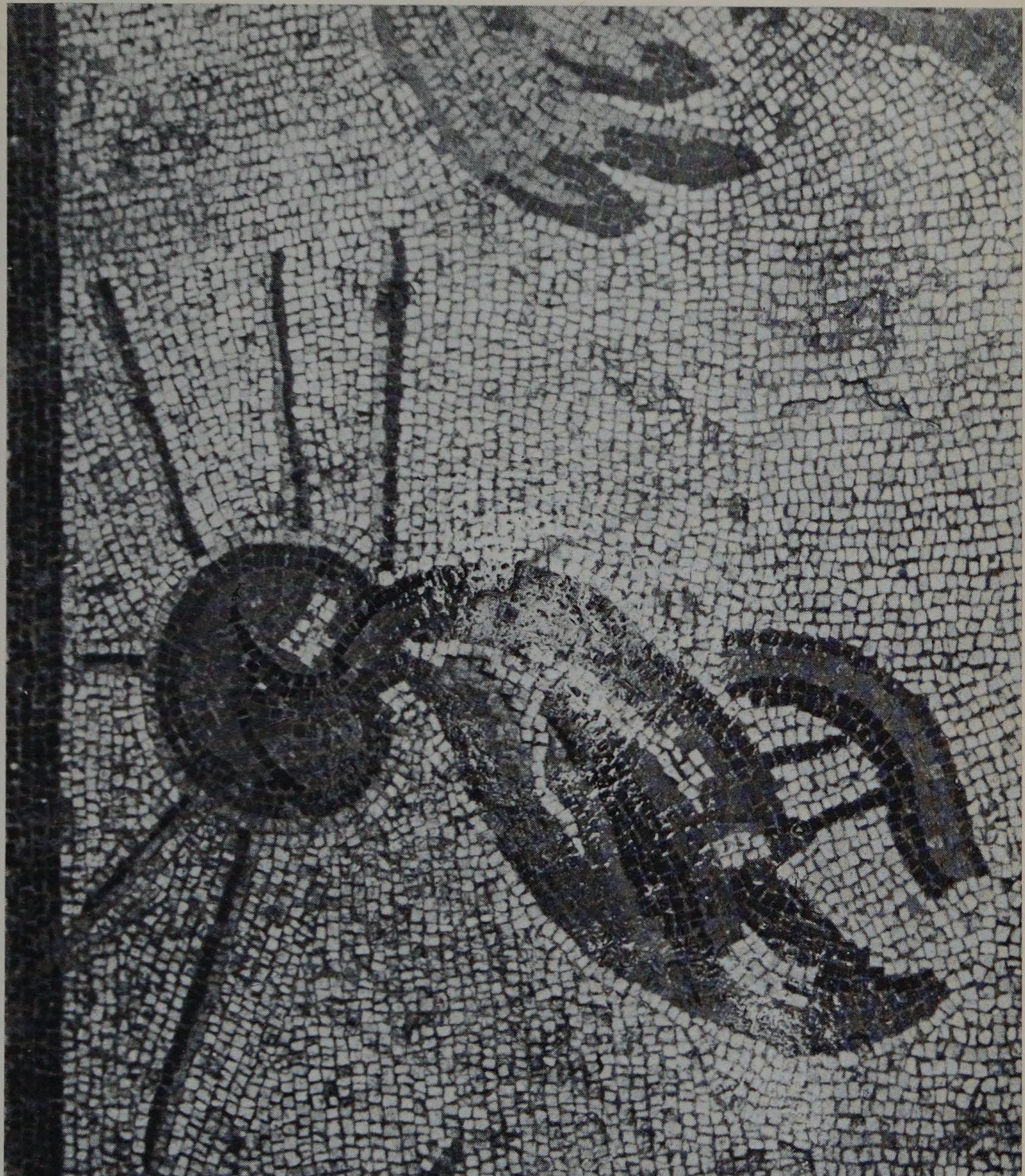

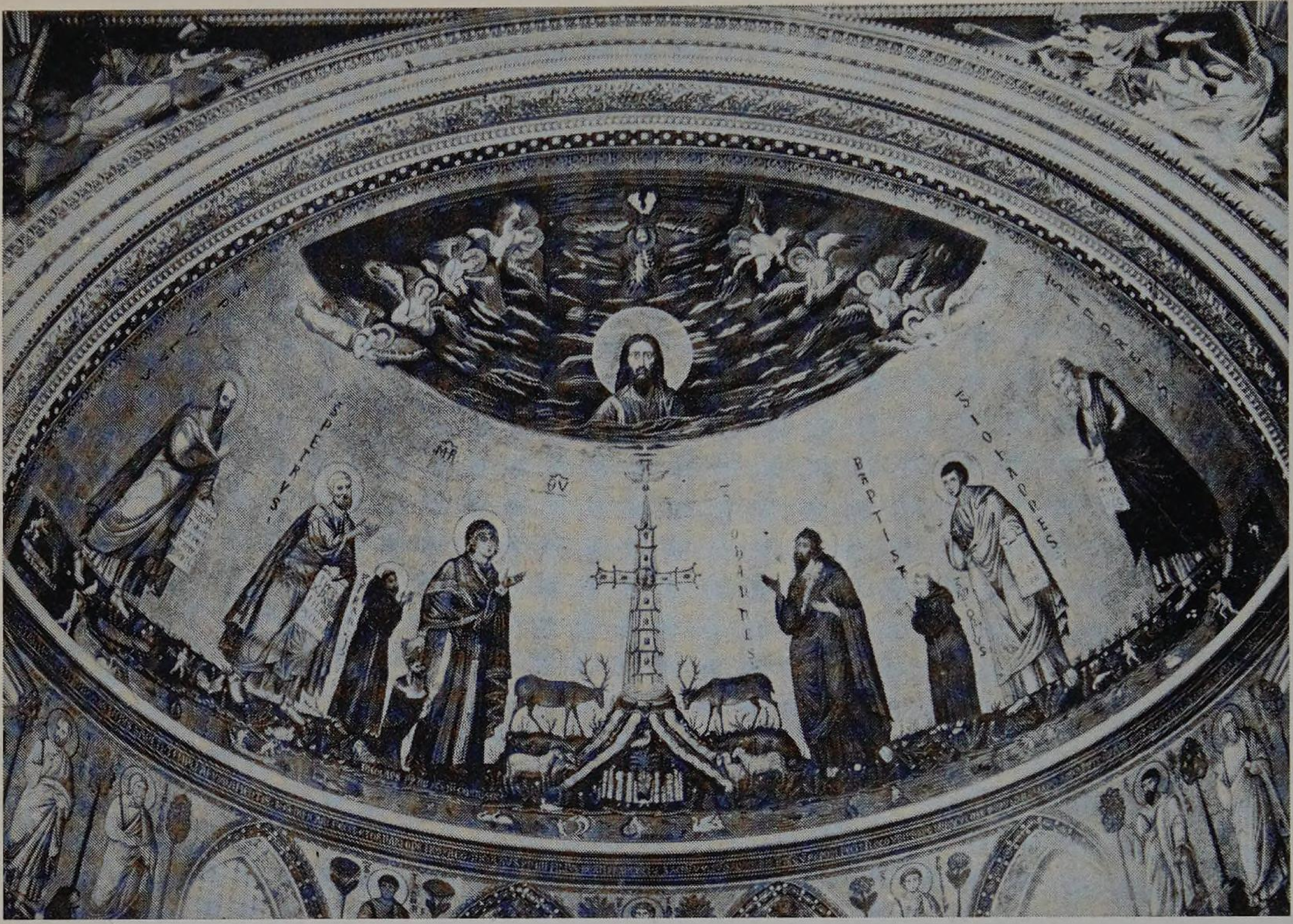

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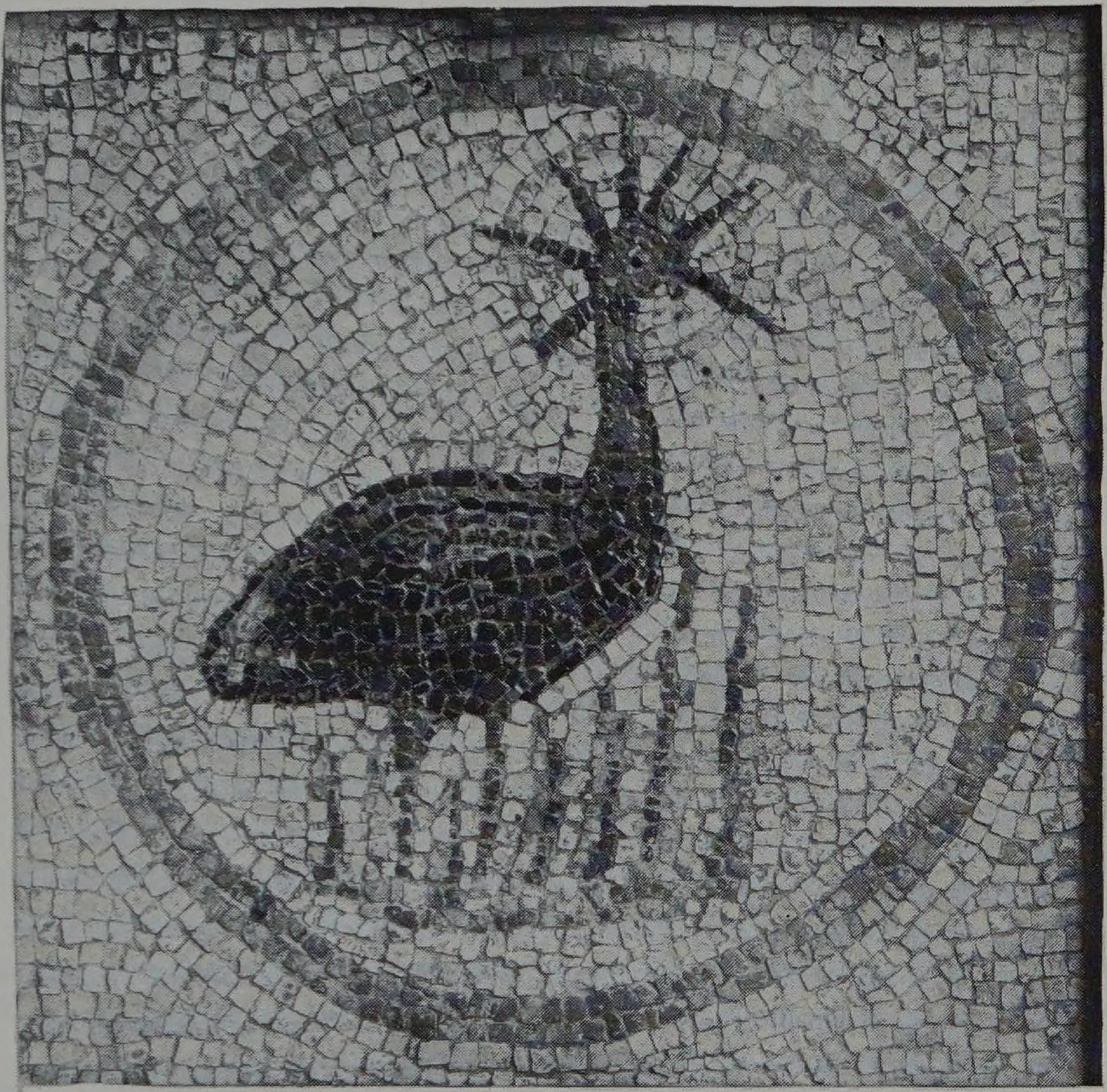

PLATE XXII

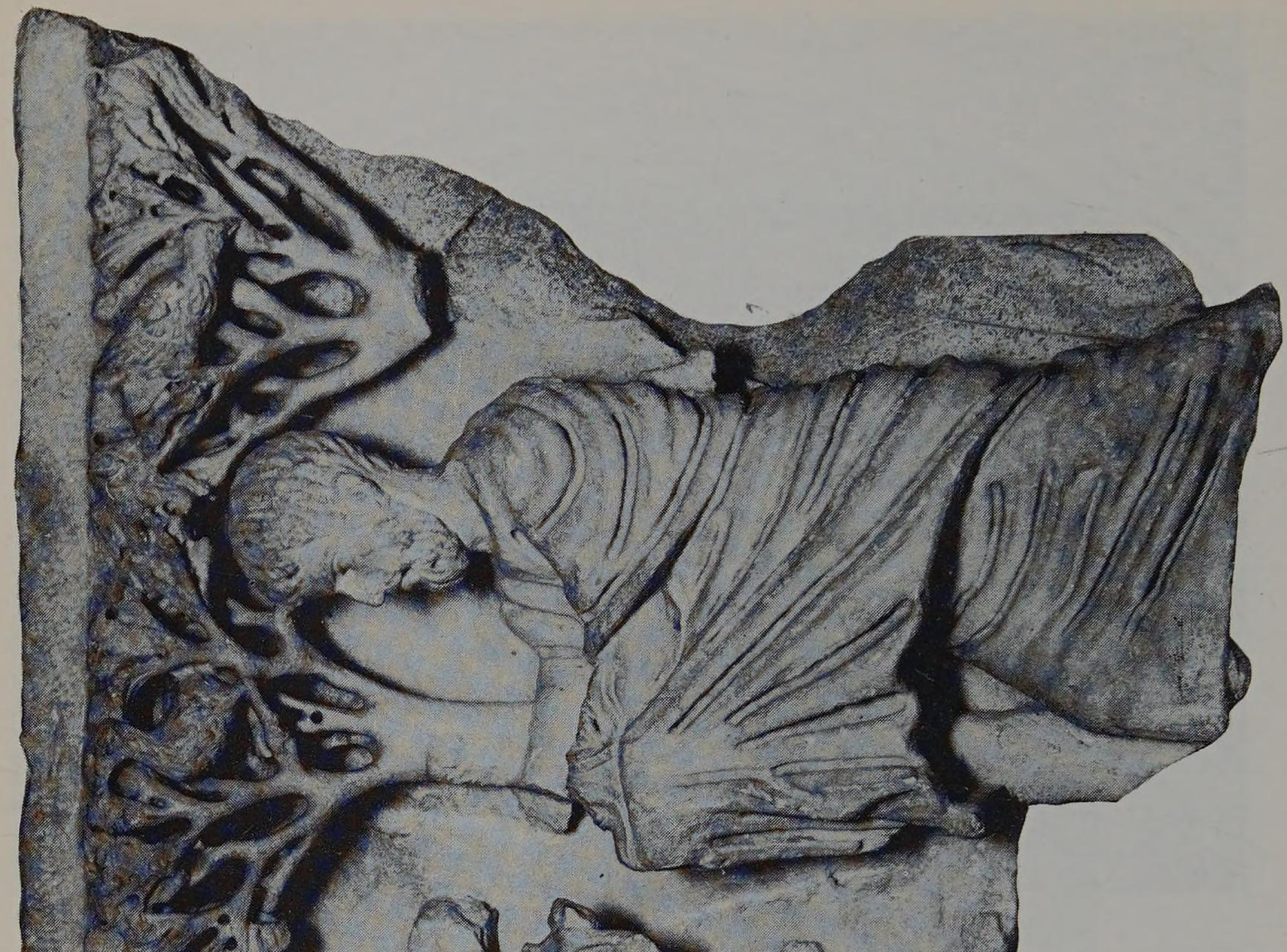

PLATE XXIV

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PLATE XXVI

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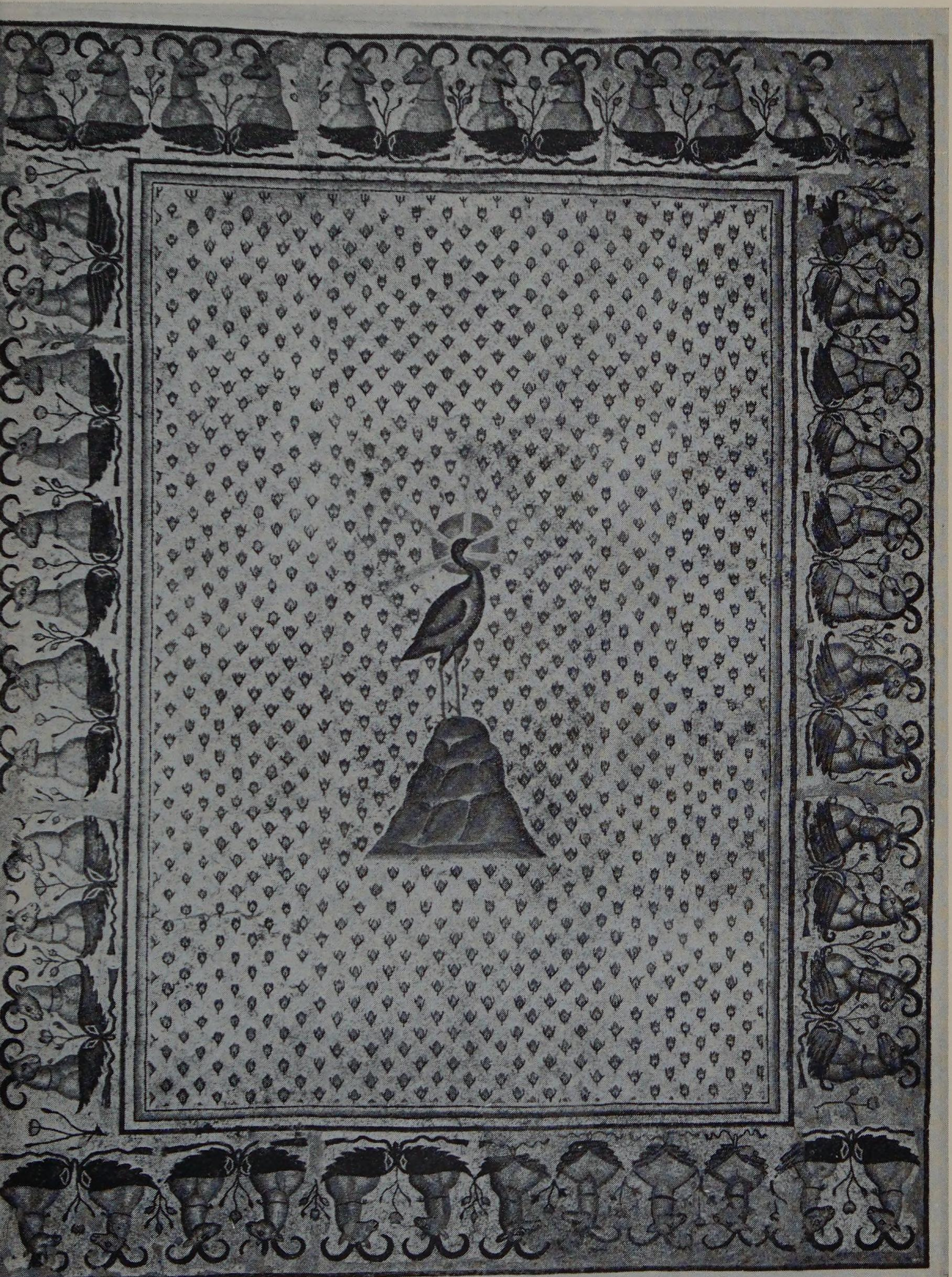

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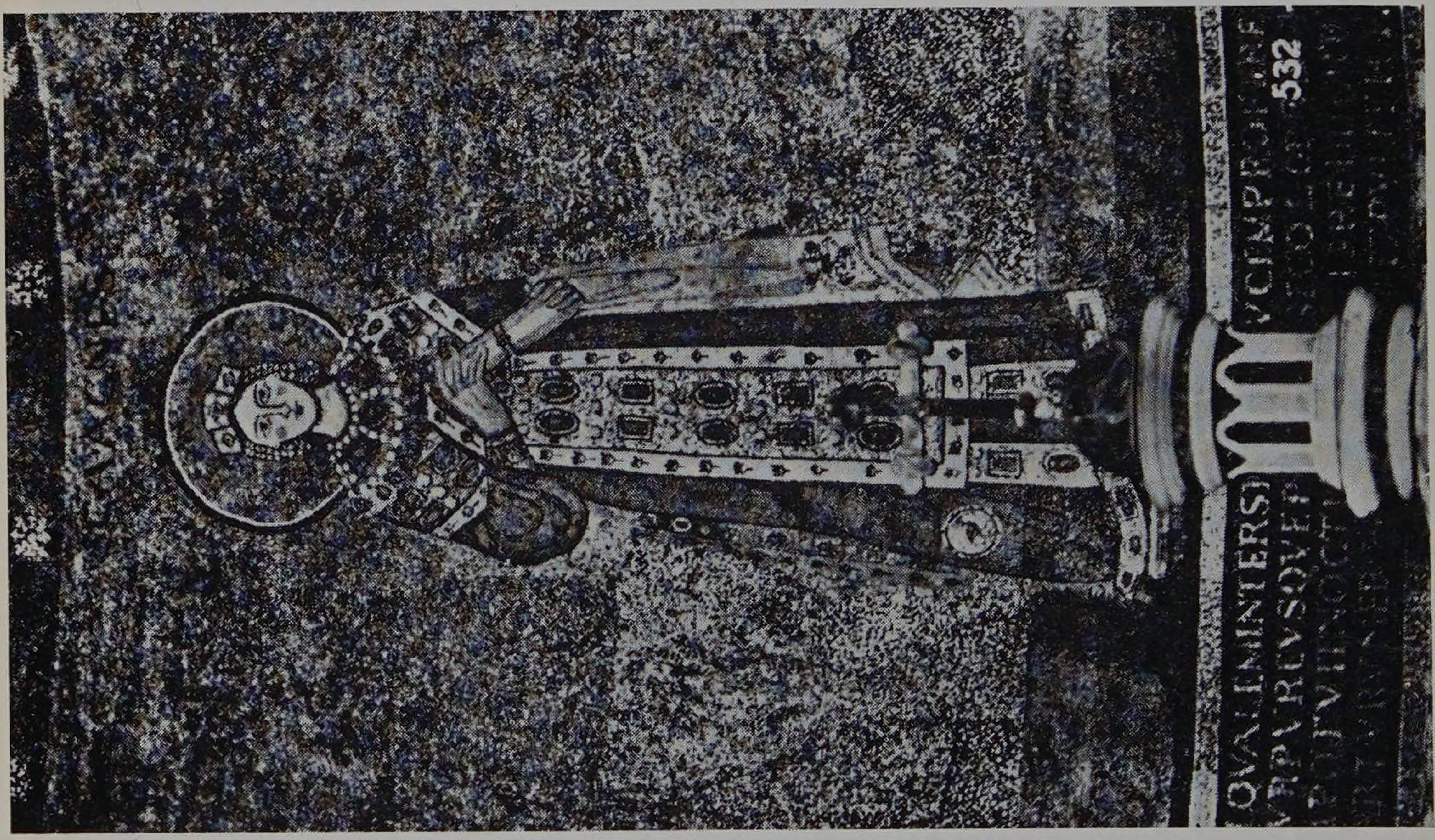

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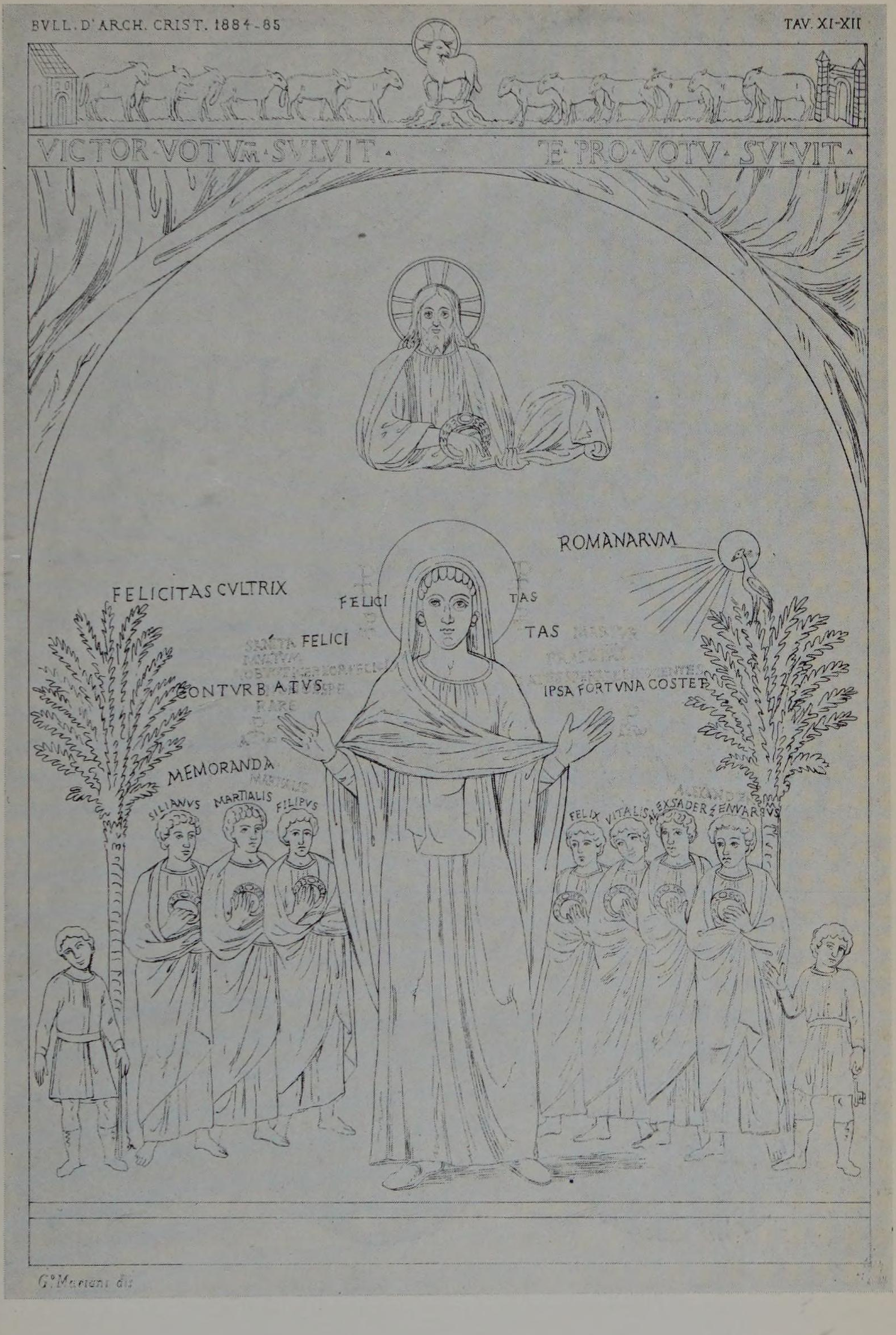
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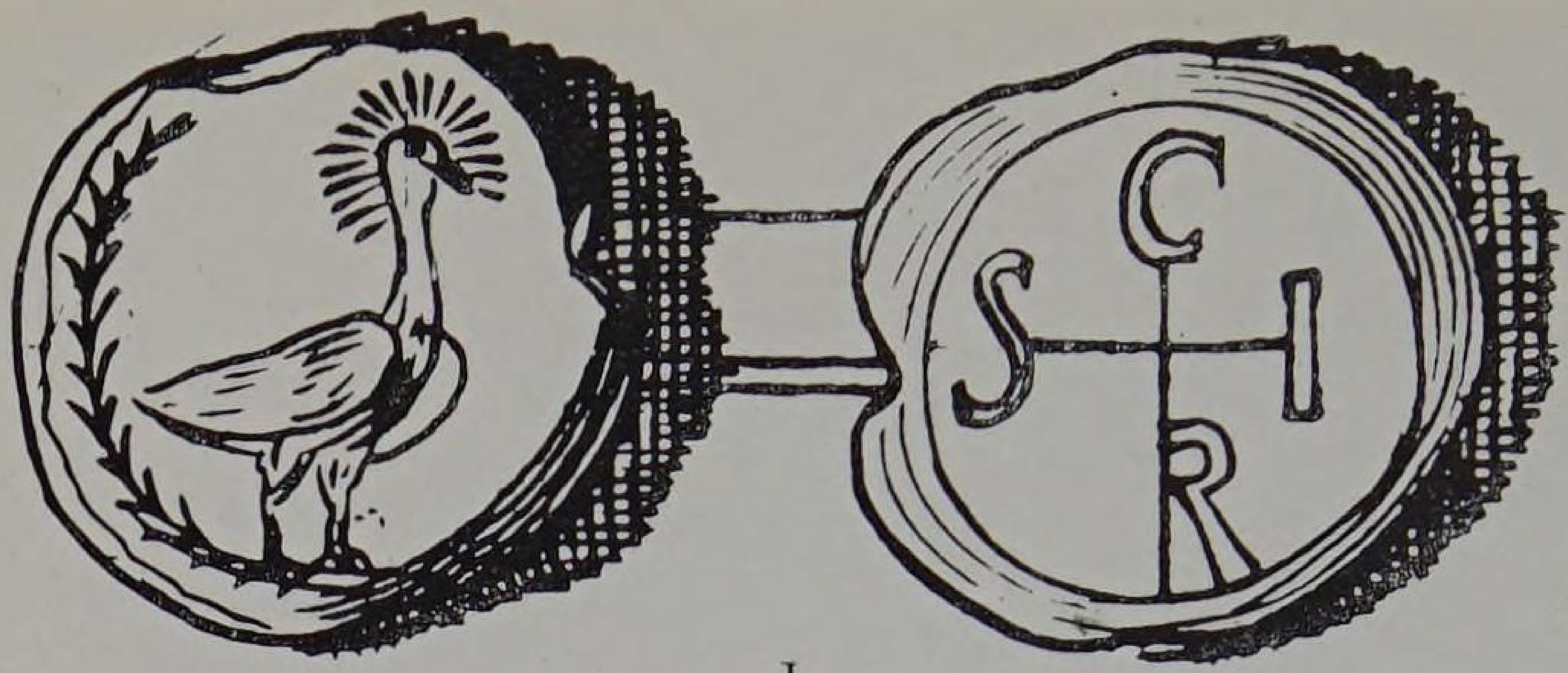

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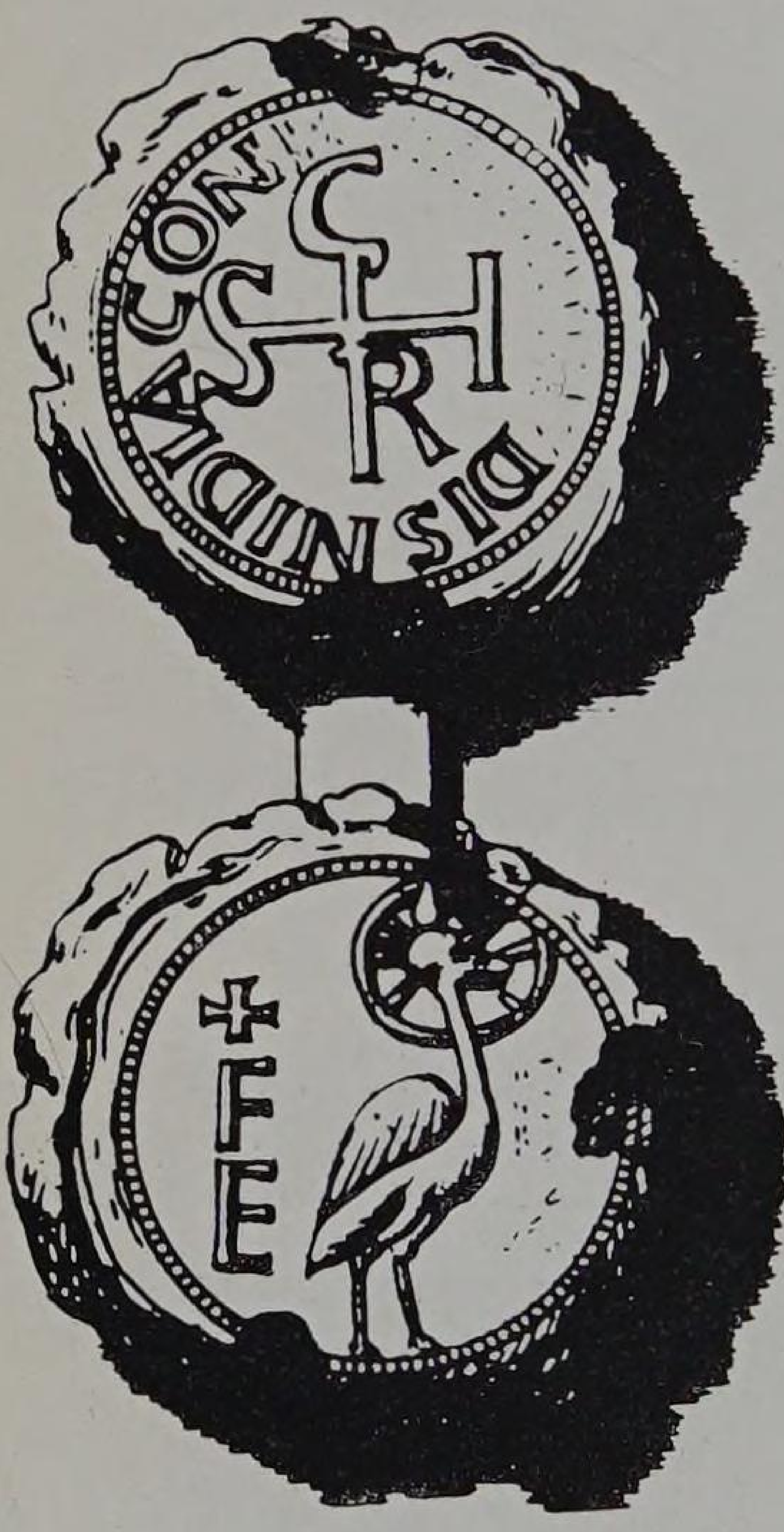

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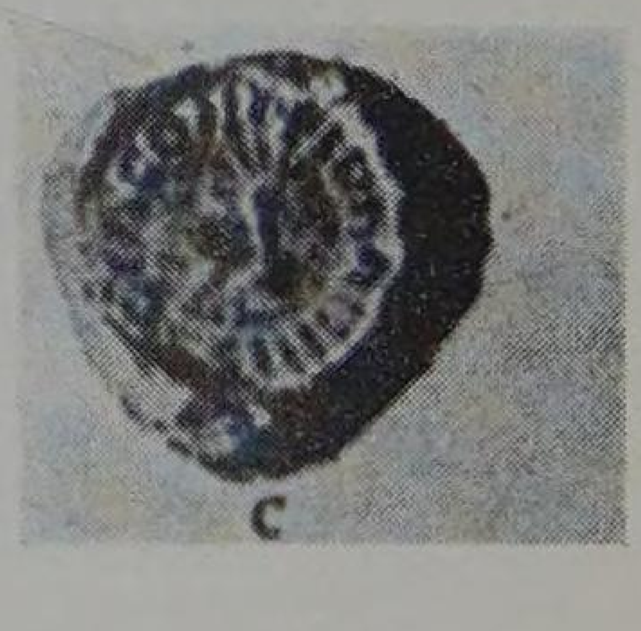

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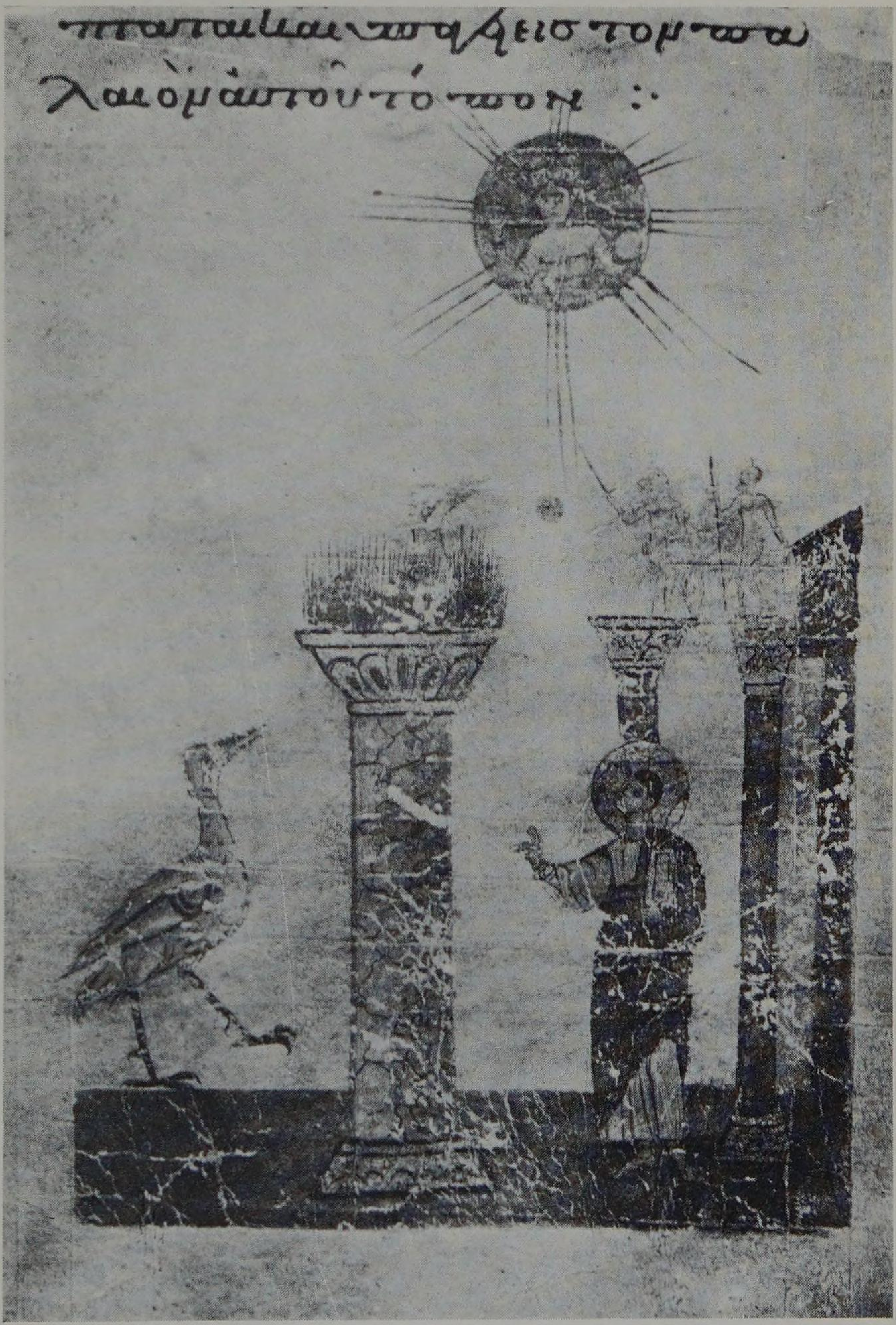

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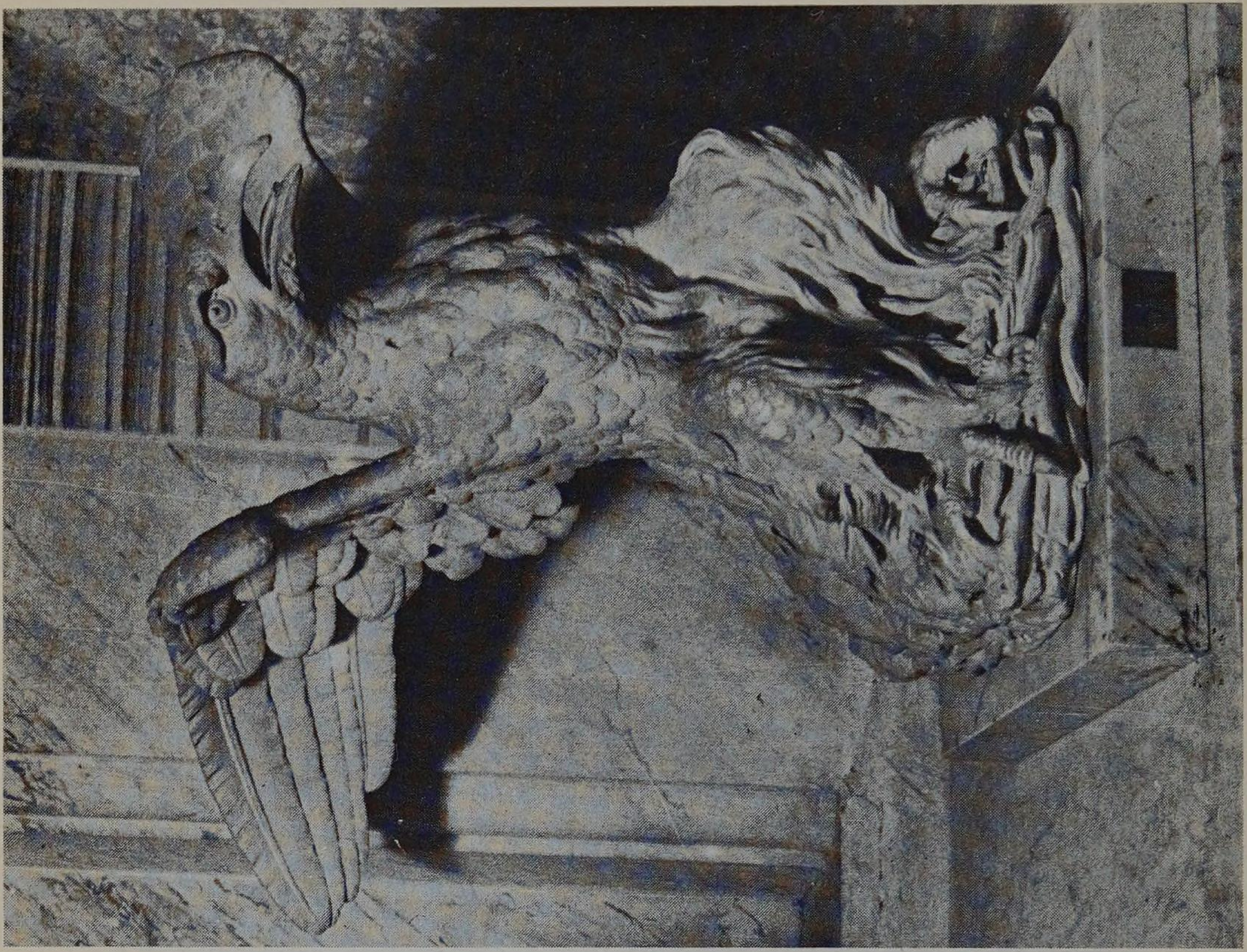

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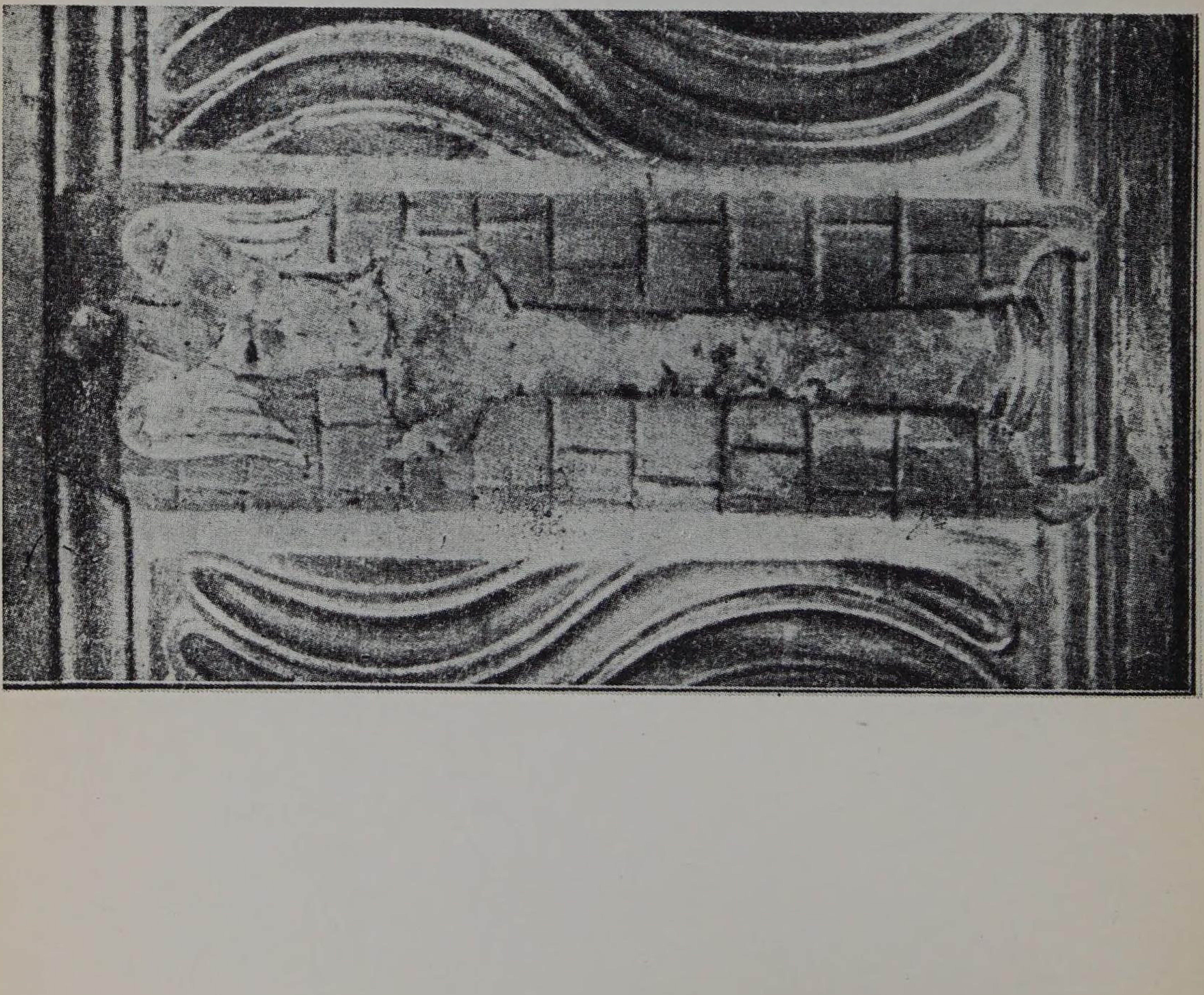

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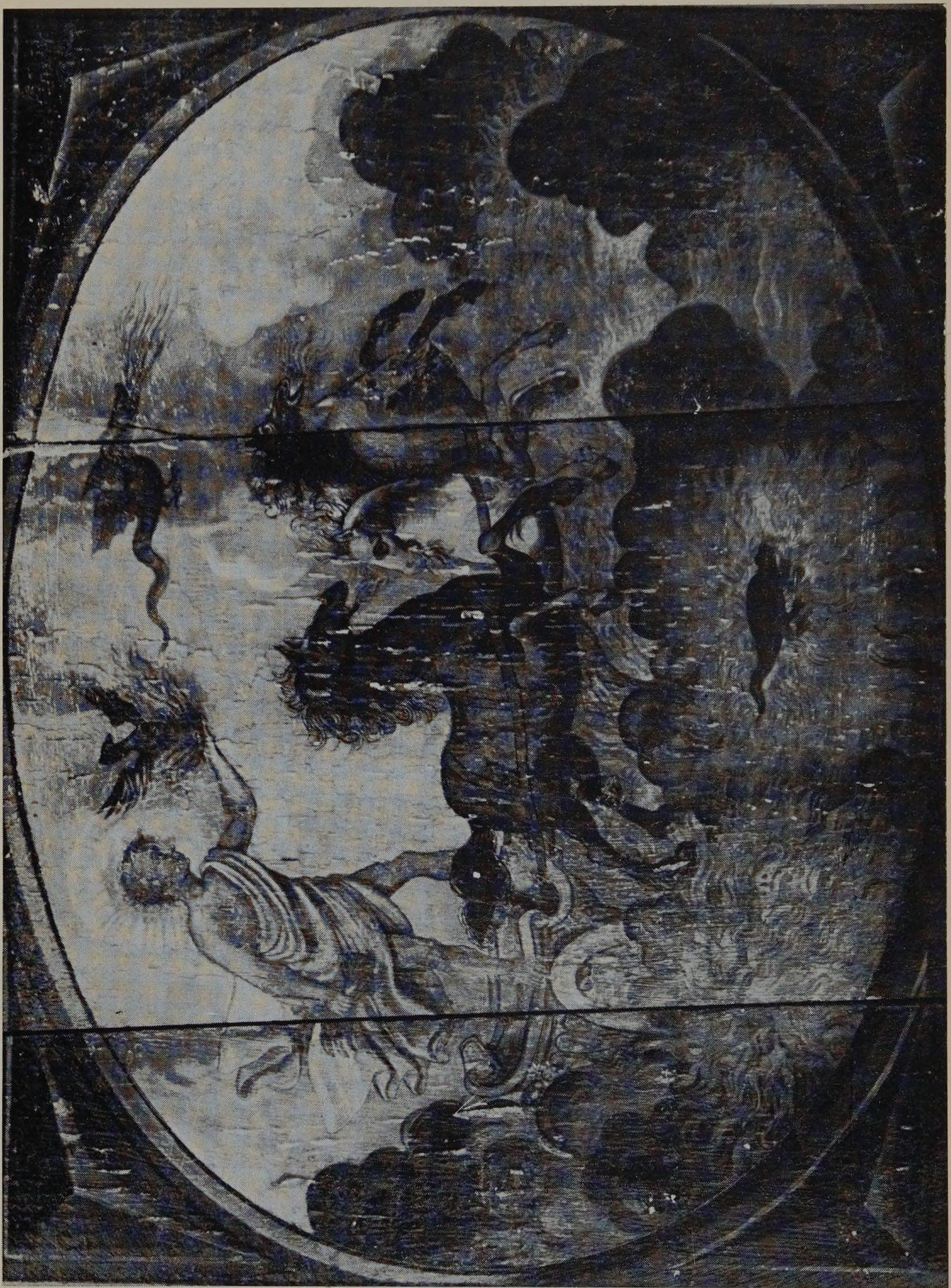
Plate XL



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7,n.4 Add B. Stock, *Cosmology and Rhetoric in The Phoenix of Lactantius*, in *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 26, 1965, 246-257. Stock's study is mainly concerned with the motif of the *locus amoenus* in *De ave phoenice*; it gives me no reason, however, to modify my views as expressed in Chapter VIII.

242ff. The ancient Egyptian connection between the *benu* and Osiris (see above p. 18) seems to have been still alive in Roman times. Reference must be made here to a fourth-century relief from Carthage, now in the Louvre, showing, according to a new interpretation, Isis with Osiris on her left hand and the *benu*-phoenix standing on a low elevation on her right hand. *Cf.* M.-Th. Picard-Schmitter, *"L'Allégorie de l'Égypte" sur un relief provenant de Carthage*, in *Revue Archéologique*, 1971, 29-58.

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